

THIRTY FAMOUS

One-Act Plays

EDITED BY

BENNETT CERF *and* VAN H CARTMELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

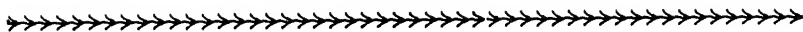
RICHARD WATTS, JR.



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FOREWORD

This is the fourth of a series of modern play anthologies by the same editors

The first of the series was entitled *Sixteen Famous American Plays*, published in 1941. It contained the following plays

Life with Father, The Time of Your Life, The Man Who Came to Dinner, The Little Foxes, Our Town, Having Wonderful Time, The Women, Boy Meets Girl, Waiting for Lefty, Dead End, The Petrified Forest, Ah, Wilderness!, The Front Page, Biography, The Green Pastures; They Knew What They Wanted

The second in the series was entitled *Sixteen Famous British Plays*, published in 1942. It contained the following plays

The Second Mrs Tanqueray, The Green Bay Tree, Journey's End, Milestones, The Circle, Cavalcade, The Green Goddess, Dangerous Corner, Mr Pim Passes By, The Barretts of Wimpole Street, Outward Bound, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Corn Is Green, What Every Woman Knows, Loyalties, Victoria Regina

The third in the series was entitled *Sixteen Famous European Plays*, published in 1943. It contained the following plays

The Wild Duck, The Weavers, The Sea Gull, Cyrano de Bergerac, The Lower Depths, The Playboy of the Western World, Anatol, The Cradle Song, Six Characters in Search of an Author, R U R, The Dybbuk, Liliom, Grand Hotel, Tovarich, Shadow and Substance, Amphitryon 38

In making these selections we confined ourselves almost entirely to modern plays, the great majority, in fact, being

comparatively recent We included only one play by any one author, and the prime requisite was the endorsement of a successful presentation in this country We furthermore sought, we hope successfully, to achieve a wide variety in type and treatment

The problems with which we were faced in the preparation of this volume were somewhat different Since the days of the old vaudeville circuits the professional one-act play has become something of a rarity It is chiefly to the vast number of little-theater groups throughout the country that the one-act play owes its prosperous survival Only after the most careful study of the successful amateur productions all over the country have we ventured to make the present selection. We have allowed ourselves considerable latitude in our choice, including two plays that have more than one scene, but these are both short plays and may properly be considered to fall within the present category Our range of playwrights in this case has been international, and the character and treatment shows even a wider scope than heretofore, a point that need not be labored when one considers the truly global stretch from Strindberg to Kaufman

We have again limited ourselves to only a single play by a given author, although in some cases, notably O'Neill and Coward, this was hard discipline.

In the matter of successful presentation in this country we have found checking difficult, but we may confidently say that whether or not each play has been enthusiastically received, we are quite safe in asserting that each has been enthusiastically and frequently produced We have been fortunate in being able to acquire a number of plays that are not easily accessible, and many that have never before appeared in any anthology. There are, of course, a few familiar selections which are definite "musts" for any such collection as this We have not, however, relied on a few outstanding plays to carry the book There is ground for suspicion that some anthologists have been content to present a few highlights or "plums" to entice the customer and then filled out their volume with less consequential mate-

rial Possibly, the success of this whole new series of play selections is due to the fact that the editors have endeavored to present tables of contents that have included *nothing but* highlights and spared neither effort nor expense to do so Considerable patience and persistence have been required to track down permission to reprint all the selections in this anthology A discouraging variety of difficulties was met with, but eventually only one play which we wished to include proved unobtainable

Certain readers and critics will question the judgment that governed our selections, but the choices necessarily represent personal opinions, and we found that getting each other to agree on thirty plays was tough enough without undertaking completely to satisfy a wide public As has been the case in the earlier books, the gentleman who has been kind enough to write our introduction has assumed no responsibility for the contents of the book Messrs Atkinson, John Mason Brown and John Anderson, who performed this service for the earlier volumes, did not concur in every instance with our selection, and we imagine Mr. Richard Watts, Jr, will have similar reservations

For the first time in this series we have included, in an appendix, brief biographical data on the various authors Here again, if any critical color has crept in, it is purely personal prejudice and enthusiasm on the part of the editors, who hereby accept the responsibility and at the same time express gratitude to the authors, agents and original publishers whose gracious permissions made this volume possible.

BENNETT CERF
VAN H. CARTMELL

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INTRODUCTION

By Richard Watts, Jr

It is my great fear that I am going to be a disappointment to the Messrs Cerf and Cartmell, the editors of this volume. Being combative gentlemen, these worthies are happiest when the critics whom they have selected to introduce their play anthologies are sniping at them scornfully, calling bitter attention to their various sins of commission and omission. Apparently it cheers them to be told that their taste in the drama is faulty and a trifle idiotic and upsets them immeasurably to be agreed with by their presiding critic—which may indicate their general attitude toward professional dramatic criticism. Anyway, it can hardly be said that the Hollywood vice of the yes-man has reached them.

It pains me, therefore, to contemplate their consternation when they find that I am in general agreement with them and think that their selections are fine. I have some dissents here and there, and I can think of some plays which I feel should have found a place in this collection—my professional pride, if nothing else, would insist on that—but I congratulate the two editors on the wisdom and the completeness of their choice. The plays herem presented make excellent reading as well as excellent acting; they represent a splendid range in subject, treatment, manner and setting, and they offer an admirable general view of the nature and quality of the one-act drama.

One virtue of this collection, and a considerable virtue it is, too, is that it is fun to read. On the whole I think there is more sheer pleasure in reading a one-act play than is to be found in perusing full-length dramas. It is a form which tends to set free the imagination and the spirit of the playwright and to send it bounding through time and

space, ignoring the customary fetters of convention and of length. Almost any playwright can say what he wants to say in less time than the full-length play requires, and the one-act work is joyously free of the usual padding. It is a sprightly form and a splendidly easygoing one, and it is no chance that the Irish, who—as dramatists, at least—are inclined to be eloquent and original in their flights of the imagination, and not too formal, are particularly triumphant in it.

In fact, if I were determined to be disapproving of the Messrs. Cerf and Cartmell, one of my chief criticisms would be that they had included too few Irish plays in their collection. It is my dogmatic opinion that Synge's *Riders to the Sea* is not only the finest drama in this volume, but is the most eloquently powerful one-act play that has ever been written. Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon* is a delightful little play and I am glad that it has been included, but I wish that space could likewise have been found for the selfsame Lady Gregory's *The Gaol Gate* and possibly for her *Spreading the News*, certainly for W. B. Yeats's stirring *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. I am a bit dubious about including St. John Ervine among the Irish playwrights, but I wish there had been room for his short work called *The Magnanimous Lover*.

Obviously it has been impossible to include in the space of one volume all of the works which should have been included, but even within these limits I would have made a few changes. For example, Eugene O'Neill's *The Moon of the Caribbees* is the best one-act play that I know of in America and is certainly the superior of the same author's effective but somewhat obvious and mechanical *In the Zone*. As for the inclusion of George S. Kaufman's *If Men Played Cards as Women Do*, it seems to me absurd to present it as the representative of American hilarity when such a wonderful work as Ring Lardner's magnificently insane *The Tridget of Greva* is omitted.

In fact if I wanted to include a short Kaufman work it

would have been the tale of a casual fire department called *The Still Alarm*. I think, though, that, despite my great admiration for Mr Kaufman as collaborator and stage director, I would leave him out of my compilation and would, after substituting *The Tridget of Greva*, try to find a place for either Marc Connelly's saga of a traveler making epic preparations for a journey 'way up to 125th Street or, if too great a delicacy didn't interfere, perhaps Mr Connelly's tale of a hapless gentleman who was forced to listen to tales of waterfalls, etc., upon a trying occasion.

Possibly at this point it may seem that, after rather grandly expressing great approval for the Messrs Cerf and Cartmell at the outset, I am now determined to tear them apart. This, however, is not the case. While I would have preferred the suggestions I have set down and have a few other reservations here and there I find almost all of the plays herein included of interest for varying reasons. In truth, the only serious plays in the volume which strike me as completely without merit are Maeterlinck's *A Miracle of St Antony* and Stanley Houghton's *The Dear Departed*, and I suppose that the fame of the Maeterlinck work warrants its inclusion, despite its hollowness.

In several other cases, even when I do not care particularly for the play, I can see why it was included and I hail the inclusion. For example, *The Drums of Oude* is certainly one of the worst melodramas ever written, and yet I have heard of it for so many years and it has achieved so widespread a reputation—in great part, of course, because its use of the native drums off stage foreshadowed the justly more celebrated employment of the tomtom in O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*—that I am glad of the chance to read it here. I doubt, though, if I will ever bother to read it again.

Likewise I think the publishers were right when they included Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*. Certainly this is one of the most unhealthy and decadent dramas in the world and I doubt whether there is a line in this volume or even in all

of world dramatic literature with which the reader will find himself in such utter accord as Herod's final "Kill that woman!" I dislike *Salomé* with great heartiness, yet there is no escaping its morbid fascination, even its touches of evil beauty, and I suspect that this volume would be incomplete without it

At this point it might be well for me to turn to some of the plays I particularly admire. As I have said, *Riders to the Sea* seems to me the most eloquent one-act play ever written. And there are few short plays finer and more moving than William Saroyan's *Hello Out There*. In the most simple and heartbreaking terms Saroyan proves that he can be just as effective, if not more so, when he is writing directly and without eccentricities as when he is being just a bit studiously perverse. *Hello Out There* and the full-length *The Time of Your Life* offer between them complete evidence that the recluse from Fresno is a true dramatist and one of the glories of the American theatre.

One of my favorites in this collection is *A Sunny Morning* by the Quintero brothers. There is in this little story of ancient sweethearts a true sunniness of the heart, a gay spirit, a romantic graciousness and a gently ironic humor that make it thoroughly enchanting. In general, I am no great enthusiast for the drama of unhappy Spain, but this work is a delight.

After so many years it is pleasant to go back to Anatole France's *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife* and find that it still maintains its playful manner and its air of humorous improvisation. In turning from the urbane and amused irony of cynical old Anatole to the savage, neurotic bitterness of Strindberg's *Miss Julie* one gets some idea of the range of plays included in this compilation. I find *Miss Julie* tiresome, overwrought and a little silly, but it still has a certain strange power about it and there is something undeniably fascinating about the black, humorless depths of its hatred. Anatole France's distaste for the human race

is infinitely more adult and intelligent but somehow less disturbing in its pathological overtones

As a writer of short plays Chekov is considerably less interesting and important than he is in his full-length dramas or his stories *The Boor*, however, is a pleasant little comedy, a sort of brief Muscovite *Taming of the Shrew*, and if there is anyone still alive who holds to the one-time popular belief that the Russians are a humorless people, given exclusively to melancholia, it may possibly disabuse him of so fantastic an idea. The fact is, of course, that the Russians, like that curiously similar nationality, the Irish, are mercurial in temperament and are thus able to rush back and forth precipitously between the heights of merriment and the depths of despondency while indulging in either quality with a fine completeness which makes it at the time seem their exclusive preoccupation. It is one of the racial traits which makes the drama of both countries so vigorously emotional and, in a strange sort of way, so alike.

Sir James M. Barrie's *The Twelve-Pound Look* will be remembered by veteran theatregoers chiefly as a vehicle for Ethel Barrymore, who used to have a wonderful time playing its heroine and bringing the magic of her voice and her gracious humor to bear on it. It is an amiable little vaudeville, pleasant enough to see or to read, but I am afraid that anyone reading it today will be struck chiefly by the annoying whimsicality of the stage directions and of Sir James's coy little asides to the reader. If you think that the Barrie quaintness is offensive in *The Twelve-Pound Look*, however, you should examine the author's pixy annotations in *A Kiss for Cinderella*, and, anyway, this characteristic weakness of the playwright shouldn't altogether blind one to the effective if obvious quality of the comedy.

Schnitzler's *The Green Cockatoo* is still fun to read and, in a skillful production, would be entertaining to watch. Its romantic artificiality is well maintained, and while its

irony is pretty obvious it does possess a true theatrical effectiveness. It is no *Anatole*, but it doesn't pretend to be, and we may continue to enjoy it for its debonair style and its sheer delight in the pleasant but now usually neglected business of using the theatre theatrically in frank and unashamed joyousness over the fact that it is being theatrical. Only the Lunts in our current drama seem to carry on this sheer relish for the theatre as theatre.

There are two famous and excellent horror plays in this volume, Lord Dunsany's *A Night at an Inn* and Louis N. Parker's dramatization of W. W. Jacob's *The Monkey's Paw*. Both of them are more effective in the theatre than in the library, but if you read them with any sense of the possibilities of staging and acting in such matters I think you will enjoy both of them. Dunsany, incidentally, seems to be pretty much forgotten these days. I saw him in Ireland recently, a massive, gray-bearded figure with the air of an old Celtic hero exiled from the company of Finn and his peers and uncomfortably thrust into modern evening clothes. I am afraid he is aware of the critical and popular neglect into which he has fallen these days and I hope the inclusion of his play here will recall to playgoers what a great man of the theatre he was just a couple of decades ago. I also wish there had been room in this volume for two other grand works of his, *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior* and *The Queen's Enemies*.

Perhaps the first thing that strikes a reader of Galsworthy's *The Little Man* is the absurd jargon that is allotted to the somewhat discreditable American of the brief morality play. When even so expert an observer as John Galsworthy can go so wrong, it is not surprising that the speech attributed to Americans in the plays and novels of lesser men should be so fantastically ridiculous. It might be hoped that one result of the war and the presence of so many American soldiers in England and so many English here would be to give our Allies at least a slightly more accurate picture of how we talk, but I am by no means

optimistic I saw a play by an Englishman about life in Kansas City in London last season, a weird and fantastic thing called *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, and in it the playwright even thought Kansas City newspapermen drank pink gin. Anyway, despite a character Galsworthy fondly thought to be American, *The Little Man*, is a rather entertaining comedy about idealism called upon to go into action.

If Philip Moeller's *Helena's Husband* seems a trifle outmoded these days, it will be remembered that this is a natural fate of pioneers, even in the drama *Helena's Husband*, like John Erskine's novel, *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*, was regarded as pretty fresh in its viewpoint and treatment when it began mocking the ancient legends back in the now-forgotten days of "debunking." To that same period in life and letters belong Susan Glaspell's *Suppressed Desires*, which made excellent fun of psychoanalysis, and Lawrence Langner's *Another Way Out*, which laughed at moral emancipation in Greenwich Village. All of these works possess, among their other interests, a value for the social historian of that fascinating if somewhat repulsive era in the national annals.

In Kenneth Sawyer Goodman's *A Game of Chess*, Holworthy Hall's and Robert Middlemass's *The Valiant* and Lewis Beach's *The Clod* we turn to three entertaining melodramas. To me the otherwise effective *A Game of Chess* ends in disappointment because its climax is so unsatisfactory. Endeavoring for a change to be a constructive critic, whatever that is, I would suggest that the work would have been improved had the remarkably inept villain unexpectedly turned the tables on his triumphant and self-satisfied antagonist. *The Valiant*, which has been so successful in vaudeville, is pat and mechanical in story and treatment but in a shameless sort of way it does get its effect. The most striking of the trio is Mr. Beach's Civil War incident, *The Clod*, which is still a play of power and merit.

The chief interest of *Lithuania* lies in matters which have nothing to do with its dramatic qualities. It seems to have been the only play written by Rupert Brooke and it represents one of the first emergences of a tale that used to come out of Eastern Europe with great regularity in the days immediately following the First World War until it became one of the favorite legends of the late Alexander Woollcott. In its own right, it is not without its interest as a horror play. Another poet, Miss Millay, is represented by her anti-war work, *Aria da Capo*, which belongs distinctly to a post-war period. It strikes me as considerably more dramatic and effective than her belligerent narrative poem, *Lidice*. Alice Gerstenberg's *Overtones* has been described as a sort of forerunner of O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*, although that is true only in the sense in which it can be said that *The Drums of Oude* foreshadowed *The Emperor Jones*.

Had I been selecting a Noel Coward play for inclusion in this volume I would have picked either the hilarious *Hands Across the Sea* or the touching *Still Life*, instead of *Fumed Oak*, but that does not prevent me from recognizing the effectiveness and skill of the comedy chosen. As for Mr. Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* it is obviously a required work for any collection of one-act plays. It is dramatic and exciting, it is filled with the sort of simple prose poetry which is Odets at his best and it is one of the finest of social protest dramas, long or short. I have already noted that Saroyan's *Hello Out There* seems to me a masterpiece.

Last of all comes Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead*, a striking anti-war play which has been the most-praised of its author's various contributions to the theatre. One of the best writers of short stories in America, Mr. Shaw has been unfortunate in the drama in that his stage works are better in their parts than as a whole and that the dramas continue to be those of a man of promise rather than of achievement. I think that *Bury the Dead* suffers from these characteristic

defects and never quite comes off, but it does have its flashes of power

The important thing about the accompanying collection is that, despite any complaints and objections that may be leveled against various entries in it—and despite my seeming querulousness I insist that my own complaints and objections are minor ones—it is interesting to read and gives the reader an excellent survey of the range and history of the one-act play. As for the current status of one-act playwriting, it is not encouraging, now that Mr. Saroyan is in the Army, the Irish talent for this particular form is undergoing a lapse characteristic of the present state of the Irish drama in general and a Southwestern newspaperman named Noel Houston, who wrote an excellent short play called *According to Law*, a couple of years ago, seems to have returned to his silence.

New York

September, 1943

The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife

A COMEDY IN TWO SCENES

BY ANATOLE FRANCE

TRANSLATED BY
CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE

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CHARACTERS

MASTER LEONARD BOTAL, *judge*
MASTER ADAM FUMÉE, *lawyer*
MASTER SIMON COLLINE, *doctor*
MASTER JEAN MAUGIER, *surgeon*
MASTER SERAFIN DULAURIER, *apothecary*
GILES BOISCOURTIER, *secretary*
A BLIND FIDDLER
CATHERINE, *Botal's wife* ·
ALISON, *Botal's servant*
MADEMOISELLE DE LA GARANDIÈRE
MADAME DE LA BRUINE
THE CHICKWEED MAN
THE WATERCRESS MAN
THE CANDLE MAN
PAGE TO MADEMOISELLE DE LA GARANDIÈRE
FOOTMAN TO MADAME DE LA BRUINE
FIRST DOCTOR'S ATTENDANT
SECOND DOCTOR'S ATTENDANT
A CHIMNEY SWEEP
FIRST APOTHECARY'S BOY
SECOND APOTHECARY'S BOY

THE MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE

SCENE ONE

A large room in JUDGE LEONARD BOTAL's house at Paris

Left Main entrance, from the rue Dauphine, when the door is open, vista to the Pont-Neuf

Right Door to the kitchen

At the rear of the stage A wooden stairway, leading to the upper rooms

On the walls are portraits of magistrates, in gown and wig, and along the walls, great cabinets, or cupboards, full of books, papers, parchments, and bags of legal documents, with more piled on top of the cabinets There is a double step-ladder on castors, with flat steps on each side, used to reach the top of the cabinets

A writing-table, small chairs, upholstered arm-chairs, and a spinning-wheel

(In Mr Granville Barker's production the street is shown in front of the house, instead of being concealed behind it, so that the chimneysweep, the chickweed-seller, the candle-man, etc., pass across the front of the stage)

The street door of the house opens on a hallway, from which a door leads off to the kitchen, and a short stairway leads up, in a direction parallel with the front of the stage, past a double lattice window open to the street, to an upper room in which most of the action takes place

This room has a large balcony and window-seat, and stands entirely open to the street The writing-table, book-case (instead of cabinets), and step-ladder are seen within it There is a bench or form, long enough to seat two or three people, in front of the table A door at the right rear corner of the room is supposed to open on a stairway leading to the rooms above

(GILES is discovered sitting on a small form in front of the table, on the rise of the curtain he turns to the audience, bows in flamboyant style, and then sits down again, with his back to the audience)

The CHICKWEED MAN goes by, calling "Chickweed! Chickweed! Good birdseed, good birdseed, good birdseed for saale!"

(Enter ALISON, with a large basket

under each arm She curtsies to the audience GILES, as soon as he spies her, runs to the street door and stands quiet beside it, so that she does not notice him As she starts to enter the house, he jumps at her and snatches a bottle from one of the baskets)

ALISON Holy Mary, don't you know better than to jump at anybody like a bogie-man, here in a public place?

GILES (*pulling a bottle of wine out of the other basket*) Don't scream, you little goose Nobody's going to pluck you You're not worth it
(*Enter MASTER ADAM FUMÉE He bows to the audience*)

ALISON Will you let the Judge's wine alone, you rascal! (*She sets down her baskets, snatches back one of the bottles, cuffs the secretary, picks up her baskets, and goes off to the kitchen The kitchen fireplace is seen through the half-open door*)

MASTER ADAM (*slightly formal in manner and speech at first*) Is this the dwelling of Mr Leonard Botal, Judge in civil and criminal cases?

GILES (*with bottle behind his back, and bowing*) Yes, sir, it's here, sir, and I'm his secretary, Giles Boiscourtier, at your service, sir

MASTER ADAM Then, boy, go tell him his old school-fellow, Master Adam Fumée, lawyer, wishes to see him on business

GILES Here he comes now, sir
(LEONARD BOTAL *comes down the stairs* GILES *goes off into the kitchen*)

MASTER ADAM Good day, Master Leonard Botal, I am delighted to see you again

LEONARD Good morning, Master Adam Fumée, how have you been this long time that I haven't set eyes on you?

MASTER ADAM Well, very well And I hope I find you the same, your Honor

LEONARD Fairly so, fairly so. And what good wind wafts you hither, Master Adam Fumée? (*They come forward in the room*)

MASTER ADAM I've come from Chartres on purpose to put in your own hands a statement on behalf of a young orphan girl

LEONARD Master Adam Fumée, do you remember the days when we were law students together at Orleans University?

MASTER ADAM Yes, yes, we used to play the flute together, and take the ladies out to picnics, and dance from morning to night But I've come, your Honor, my dear old school-fellow, to hand you a statement on behalf of a young orphan girl whose case is now pending before you

LEONARD Will she give good fees?

MASTER ADAM She is a young orphan girl

LEONARD Yes, yes, I know But, will she give good fees?

MASTER ADAM She is a young orphan girl, who's been robbed by her guardian, and he left her nothing but her eyes to weep with But if she wins her suit, she will be rich again, and will give plentiful proof of her gratitude

LEONARD (*taking the statement which MASTER ADAM hands him*). We will look into the matter

MASTER ADAM I thank you, your Honor, my dear old school-fellow

LEONARD We will look into it, without fear or favor

MASTER ADAM That goes without saying But, tell me Is everything going smoothly with you? You seem worried And yet, you are well placed here the judgeship's a good one?

LEONARD I paid enough for it to be a good one—and I didn't get cheated

MASTER ADAM Perhaps you are lonely Why don't you get married?

LEONARD What, what! Don't you know, Master Adam, that I *have* just been married? (*They sit down on the form in front of the table*) Yes, only last month, to a girl from one of our best country families, young and handsome, Catherine Momichel, the seventh daughter of the Criminal Court Judge at Salency But alas! she is dumb Now you know my affliction

MASTER ADAM Your wife is dumb?

LEONARD Alas, yes

MASTER ADAM Quite, quite dumb?

LEONARD As a fish

MASTER ADAM And you didn't notice it till after you'd married her?

LEONARD Oh, I couldn't help noticing it, of course, but it didn't seem to make so much difference to me then as it does now I considered her beauty, and her property, and thought of nothing but the advantages of the match and the happiness I should have with her But now these matters seem less important, and I do wish she could talk, that would be a real intellectual

pleasure for me, and, what's more, a practical advantage for the household What does a Judge need most in his house? Why, a good-looking wife, to receive the suitors pleasantly, and, by subtle suggestions gently bring them to the point of making proper presents, so that their cases may receive—more careful attention People need to be encouraged to make proper presents A woman, by clever speech and prudent action, can get a good ham from one, and a roll of cloth from another, and make still another give poultry or wine But this poor dumb thing Catherine gets nothing at all While my fellow-judges have their kitchens and cellars and stables and store-rooms running over with good things, all thanks to their wives, I hardly get wherewithal to keep the pot boiling You see, Master Adam Fumée, what I lose by having a dumb wife I'm not worth half as much And the worst of it is, I'm losing my spirits, and almost my wits, with it all

MASTER ADAM There's no reason in that, now, your Honor Just consider the thing closely, and you will find some advantages in your case as it stands, and no mean ones neither

LEONARD No, no, Master Adam, you don't understand Think!—When I hold my wife in my arms—a woman as beautiful as the finest carved statue, at least so I think—and quite as silent, that I'm sure of—it makes me feel queer and uncanny, I even ask myself if I'm holding a graven image or a mechanical toy, or a magic doll made by a sorcerer, not a real human child of our Father in Heaven, sometimes, in the morning I am tempted to

jump out of bed to escape from bewitchment

MASTER ADAM What notions!

LEONARD Worse yet! What with having a dumb wife, I'm going dumb myself Sometimes I catch myself using signs, as she does The other day, on the Bench, I even pronounced judgment in pantomime, and condemned a man to the galleys, just by dumb show and gesticulation

MASTER ADAM Enough! Say no more! I can see that a dumb wife may be a pretty poor conversationalist! There's not much fun in talking yourself, when you get no response

LEONARD Now you know the reason why I'm in low spirits

MASTER ADAM I won't contradict you, I admit that your reason is full and sufficient But perhaps there's a remedy Tell me Is your wife deaf as well as dumb?

LEONARD Catherine is no more deaf than you and I are, even less, I might say She can hear the very grass growing

MASTER ADAM Then the case is not hopeless When the doctors and surgeons and apothecaries succeed in making the deaf-and-dumb speak, their utterance is as poor as their ears, for they can't hear what they say themselves, any more than what's said to them But it's quite different with the dumb who can hear 'Tis but child's play for a doctor to untie their tongues. The operation is so simple that it's done every day to puppies that can't learn to

bark Must a countryman like me come to town to tell you that there's a famous doctor, just around the corner from your own house, in Buci Square, at the Sign of the Dragon, Master Simon Colline, who has made a reputation for loosing the tongues of the ladies of Paris? In a turn of the hand, he'll draw from your wife's lips a full flood of mellifluous speech, just as you'd turn on a spigot and let the water run forth like a sweet-purling brook

LEONARD Is this true, Master Adam? Aren't you deceiving me? Aren't you speaking as a lawyer in court?

MASTER ADAM I'm speaking as a friend, and telling you the plain truth

LEONARD Then I'll send for this famous doctor—and that right away

MASTER ADAM As you please But before you call him in, you must reflect soberly, and consider what it's really best to do For, take it all in all, though there are some disadvantages in having a dumb wife, there are some advantages, too Well, good day, your Honor, my dear old school-fellow (*They go together to the street door*) Remember, I'm truly your friend—and read over my statement, I beg you If you give your just judgment in favor of the orphan girl robbed by her grasping guardian, you will have no cause to regret it

LEONARD Be back this afternoon, Master Adam Fumée, I will have my decision ready (*They bow low to each other Exit MASTER ADAM*)

LEONARD (*at the door, calling*)
Giles! Giles! The rogue never

hears me, he is in the kitchen, as usual, upsetting the soup and the servant He's a knave and a scoundrel Giles! Giles! Here, you rapscallion! You reprobate!

GILES (*entering*) Present, your Honor

LEONARD (*taking him by the ear*) Sirrah! Go straight to the famous doctor, Master Simon Colline, who lives in Buci Square, at the Sign of the Dragon, and tell him to come to my house at once, to treat a dumb woman

GILES Yes, your Honor (*GILES starts off, running, to the right*)

LEONARD Go the nearest way, not round by the New Bridge, to watch the jugglers I know you, you slowpoke, there's not such another cheat and loafer in ten counties (*GILES comes back, slowly, across stage, and stops*)

GILES Sir, you wrong me

LEONARD Be off! and bring the famous doctor back with you

GILES (*bolting off to the left*) Yes, your Honor

LEONARD (*going up and sitting down at the table, which is loaded with brief-bags*) I have fourteen verdicts to render today, besides the decree in the case of Master Adam Furnée's ward And that is no small labor, because a decree, to do credit to the Judge, must be cleverly worded, subtle, elegant, and adorned with all the ornaments both of style and of thought The ideas must be pleasingly conceived and playfully

expressed Where should one show one's wit, if not in a verdict?

(*The WATERCRESS MAN enters from the right and crosses to the left singing* "Good watercress, fresh from the spring! Keeps you healthy and hearty! Six farthings a bunch Six farthings a bunch" *When the WATERCRESS MAN is well on, enters the CANDLE MAN from left to right, singing* "Candles! Cotton-wick candles! Burn bright as the stars!" *While he is passing, CATHERINE enters from the upper stairway door; she curtsies to the audience and then sits on the window-seat, embroidering As the street-cries die away LEONARD looks up from his work at the table, and seeing CATHERINE, goes to her and kisses her as she rises to meet him She makes a curtsy, kisses him in return, and listens with pleased attention*)

Good morning, my love I didn't even hear you come down You are like the fairy forms in the stories, that seem to glide upon air, or like the dreams which the gods, as poets tell, send down to happy mortals (*CATHERINE shows her pleasure in his compliments*) My love, you are a marvel of nature, and a triumph of art, you have all charms but speech (*CATHERINE turns away sobbing slightly*) Shouldn't you be glad to have that, too? (*She turns back, intensely interested*) Shouldn't you be happy to let your lips utter all the pretty thoughts I can read in your eyes? Shouldn't you be pleased to show your wit? (*She waves her handkerchief in glee*) Shouldn't you like to tell your husband how you love him? Wouldn't it be delightful to call him your treasure and sweet-heart? Yes, surely! (*They rise CATHERINE is full of pleased animation*)

Well, I've a piece of good news
for you, my love A great doctor
is coming here presently, who
can make you talk (CATHERINE
shows her satisfaction, dancing
gracefully up and down) He will
untie your tongue and never hurt
you a bit

(CATHERINE'S movements express
charming and joyous impatience A
BLIND MAN goes by in the street
playing a lively old-fashioned coun-
try dance He stops and calls out in
a doleful voice "Charity, for the
love of God, good gentlemen and
ladies" LEONARD motions him away,
but CATHERINE pleads for him by
her gestures, indicating that he is
blind LEONARD yields and goes
back to his writing-table She stands
at the window listening while the
BLIND MAN sings)

The BLIND MAN

There's lots of good fish in the sea,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
Now who will come and fish with
me?

La dee ra, la dee ra,
Now who'll with me a-fishing go?
My dainty, dainty damsel, O!
Come fish the livelong day with me,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
And who will then be caught?
we'll see!

La dee ra, dee ra, day

(Toward the end of the verse CATHERINE glances at LEONARD and sees that she is unobserved, she steals to the street door as the BLIND MAN begins the second verse there, during this verse she dances to him and frolics around the stage as he sings)

The BLIND MAN

Along the rippling river's bank,
La dee ra, la dee ra,

Along the wimpling water's bank,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
Along the bank so shady O
I met the miller's lady, O
And danced with her the livelong
day
La dee ra, la dee ra,
And oh! I danced my heart away!
La dee ra, dee ra, day

(The BLIND MAN stops playing and singing, and says, in a hollow and terrifying voice "Charity, for the love of God, good gentlemen and ladies")

LEONARD (who has been buried in his documents and noticed nothing, now drives the BLIND MAN off the stage with objurgations) Vagabond, robber, ruffian! (And throws a lot of brief-bags and books at his head, then speaks to CATHERINE, who has gone back to her place) My love, since you came downstairs, I haven't been wasting my time, I have sentenced fourteen men and six women to the pillory, and distributed, among seventeen different people— (He counts up)—six, twenty-four, thirty-two, forty-four, forty-seven, and nine, fifty-six, and eleven, sixty-seven, and ten, seventy-seven, and eight, eighty-five, and twenty, a hundred and five—a hundred and five years in the galleys Doesn't that make you realize the great power of a judge? How can I help feeling some pride in it?

(CATHERINE, who has stopped her work, leans on the table, and smugly watches her husband Then she sits down on the table, which is covered with brief-bags)

LEONARD (making as if to pull the bags from under her) My love, you are hiding great criminals from my justice Thieves and murderers. But

I will not pursue them, their place of refuge is sacred

(A CHIMNEY SWEEP passes in the street, calling "Sweep your chimneys, my ladies, sweep them clear and clean")

(LEONARD and CATHERINE kiss across the table But, seeing the DOCTORS arriving, CATHERINE runs off up the stairs Enter, in formal procession, GILES, leading the line and imitating a trumpeter, then the two DOCTORS' ATTENDANTS, then MASTER SIMON and MASTER JEAN The ATTENDANTS, one carrying the case of instruments, take their stand on either side of the door The DOCTOR and SURGEON bow formally to the audience)

GILES Your Honor, here's the great doctor you sent for

MASTER SIMON (*bowing*) Yes, I am Master Simon Colline himself

And this is Master Jean Maugier, surgeon You called for our services?

LEONARD Yes, sir, to make a dumb woman speak

MASTER SIMON Good! We must wait for Master Serafin Dulaurier, apothecary As soon as he comes we will proceed to operate according to our knowledge and understanding

LEONARD Ah! You really need an apothecary to make a dumb woman speak?

MASTER SIMON Yes, sir, to doubt it is to show total ignorance of the relations of the organs to each other, and of their mutual interdependence Master Serafin Dulaurier will soon be here

MASTER JEAN MAUGIER (*suddenly bellowing out in stentorian tones*)

Oh! how grateful we should be to learned doctors like Master Simon Colline, who labor to preserve us in health and comfort us in sickness Oh! how worthy of praise and of blessings are these noble doctors who follow in their profession the rules of scientific theory and of long practice

MASTER SIMON (*bowing slightly*) You are much too kind, Master Jean Maugier

LEONARD While we are waiting for the apothecary, won't you take some light refreshment, gentlemen?

MASTER SIMON Most happy

MASTER JEAN Delighted

LEONARD Alison! So then, Master Simon Colline, you will perform a slight operation and make my wife speak?

MASTER SIMON Say, rather, I shall order the operation I command, Master Jean Maugier executes Have you your instruments with you, Master Jean?

MASTER JEAN Yes, Master (*He claps his hands, the ATTENDANTS run forward into the room, and, each holding one side, they unfold the large cloth case of instruments and hold it up, disclosing a huge saw with two-inch teeth, and knives, pincers, scissors, a skewer, a bit-stock, an enormous bit, etc*)

LEONARD I hope, sirs, you don't intend to use all those?

MASTER SIMON One must never be caught unarmed by a patient

(The ATTENDANTS fold up the case and give it to MASTER JEAN, then run back to their positions by the door, as ALISON, with a large tray, bottles, and glasses, enters from the kitchen)

LEONARD Will you drink, gentlemen?

(COLLINE and MAUGIER take glasses from ALISON and drink, after ALISON has kissed COLLINE's glass)

MASTER SIMON This light wine of yours is not half bad

LEONARD Very kind of you to say so It's from my own vineyard

MASTER SIMON You shall send me a cask of it

LEONARD *(to GILES, who has poured himself a glass full to the brim)* I didn't tell you to drink, you reprobate

MASTER JEAN *(looking out of the window)* Here is Master Serafin Dulaurier, the apothecary *(Enter MASTER SERAFIN He trots across the stage, stopping to bow to the audience)*

MASTER SIMON *(peering into the street)* And here is his mule! Or no—'tis Master Serafin himself You never can tell them apart *(MASTER SERAFIN joins the group in the room)* Drink, Master Serafin It is fresh from the cellar

MASTER SERAFIN Your good health, my Masters!

MASTER SIMON *(to ALISON)* Pour freely, fair Hebe Pour right, pour left, pour here, pour there Which-ever way she turns, she shows new charms. Are you not proud, my girl, of your trim figure?

ALISON For all the good it does me, there is no reason to be proud of it Charms are not worth much unless they are hidden in silk and brocade

MASTER SERAFIN Your good health, my Masters! *(They ALL drink, and make ALISON drink with them)*

ALISON You like to fool with us But free gratis for nothing

MASTER SIMON Now we are all here, shall we go see the patient?

LEONARD I will show you the way, gentlemen

MASTER SIMON After you, Master Maugier, you go first

MASTER MAUGIER *(glass in one hand case of instruments in the other)* I'll go first, since the place of honor is the rear *(He crosses to the left, and goes behind the table toward the door, following BOTAL)*

MASTER SIMON After you, Master Serafin Dulaurier *(MASTER SERAFIN follows MAUGIER, bottle in hand MASTER SIMON, after stuffing a bottle into each pocket of his gown, and kissing the servant, ALISON, goes up stage, singing)*

*Then drink! and drink! and drink again!
Drink shall drown our care and pain
Good friends must drink before they part,
To warm the cockles of the heart!
(ALISON, after cuffing GILES, who was trying to kiss her, goes up last)
(ALL sing in chorus as they go out by the right upper door)
Then drink! and drink! and drink again!*

CURTAIN

SCENE TWO

SCENE —*the same Four or five hours have elapsed*

MASTER ADAM Good afternoon, your Honor How are you this afternoon?

seizing him by the shoulders and shaking him) 'Twas your advice brought this trouble upon me

LEONARD Well, fairly well And how are you?

MASTER ADAM Why, what do you mean?

MASTER ADAM Well as can be Excuse my besieging you, your Honor, my dear comrade Have you looked into the case of my young ward who's been robbed by her guardian?

LEONARD Not yet, Master Adam Fumée But what's that you say? You've been robbing your ward?

LEONARD I sent for the famous doctor you told me about, Master Simon Colline He came, with a surgeon and an apothecary, he examined my wife, Catherine, from head to foot, to see if she was dumb Then, the surgeon cut my dear Catherine's tongue-ligament, the apothecary gave her a pill—and she spoke

MASTER ADAM She spoke? Did she need a pill, to speak?

LEONARD Yes, because of the interdependence of the organs

MASTER ADAM Oh! Ah! Anyhow, the main point is, she spoke And what did she say?

MASTER ADAM No, no, never think it, your Honor I said "my" out of pure interest in her But I am not her guardian, thank God! I'm her lawyer And, if she gets back her estate, which is no small estate neither, then I shall be her husband, yes, I've had the foresight to make her fall in love with me already And so, I shall be greatly obliged to you if you'll examine her case at the earliest possible moment All you have to do is to read the statement I gave you, that contains everything you need to know about the case

LEONARD She said "Bring me my looking-glass!" And, seeing me quite overcome by my feelings, she added, "You old goose, you shall give me a new satin gown and a velvet-trimmed cape for my birthday"

LEONARD Your statement is there, Master Adam, on my table I should have looked through it already, if I hadn't been so besieged But I've been entertaining the flower of the medical faculty here (*Suddenly*

MASTER ADAM And she kept on talking?

LEONARD She hasn't stopped yet

MASTER ADAM And yet you don't

thank me for my advice, you don't thank me for having sent you to that wonderful doctor? Aren't you overjoyed to hear your wife speak?

LEONARD (*sourly*) Yes, certainly I thank you with all my heart, Master Adam Fumée, and I am overjoyed to hear my wife speak

MASTER ADAM No! You do not show as much satisfaction as you ought to. There is something you are keeping back—something that's worrying you

LEONARD Where did you get such a notion?

MASTER ADAM From your face. What is bothering you? Isn't your wife's speech clear?

LEONARD Yes, it's clear—and abundant. I must admit, its abundance would be a trial to me if it kept up at the rate which it started at

MASTER ADAM Ah! I feared *that* beforehand, your Honor. But you mustn't be cast down too soon. Perhaps this flood of words will ebb. It is the first overflow of a spring too long bottled up. My best congratulations, your Honor. My ward's name is Ermeline de la Garandière. Don't forget her name, show her favor, and you will find proper gratitude. I will be back later in the day.

LEONARD Master Adam Fumée, I will look into your case at once. (*Exit MASTER ADAM FUMÉE. CATHERINE is heard off stage singing the BLIND MAN'S song, LEONARD starts, shakes his head, hurries to his writing-table, and sits down to work. CATHERINE, still singing, enters gaily, and goes to him at the table.*)

LEONARD (*reading*) "Statement, on behalf of Ermeline-Jacynthe-Marthe de la Garandière, gentlewoman."

CATHERINE (*standing behind his chair, and first finishing her song "La dee ra, dee ra, day," then speaking with great volubility*) What are you doing, my dear? You seem busy. You work too much. (*She goes to the window-seat and takes up her embroidery*) Aren't you afraid it will make you ill? You must rest once in a while. Why don't you tell me what you are doing, dear?

LEONARD My love, I

CATHERINE Is it such a great secret? Can't I know about it?

LEONARD My love, I

CATHERINE If it's a secret, don't tell me.

LEONARD Won't you give me a chance to answer? I am examining a case and preparing to draw up a verdict on it.

CATHERINE Is drawing up a verdict so very important?

LEONARD Most certainly it is. (*CATHERINE sits at the window singing and humming to herself, and looking out*) In the first place, people's honor, then liberty, and sometimes even their life, may depend on it, and furthermore, the Judge must show therein both the depth of his thought and the finish of his style.

CATHERINE Then examine your case and prepare your verdict, my dear. I'll be silent.

LEONARD That's right "Er-

melne-Jacinte-Marthe de la Garandière, gentlewoman "

CATHERINE My dear, which do you think would be more becoming to me, a damask gown, or a velvet suit with a Turkish skirt?

LEONARD I don't know, I

CATHERINE I think a flowered satin would suit my age best, especially a light-colored one, with a *small* flower pattern

LEONARD Perhaps so But

CATHERINE And don't you think, my dear, that it is quite improper to have a hoop-skirt very full? Of course, a skirt must have *some* fullness or else you don't seem dressed at all, so, we mustn't let it be scanty But, my dear, you wouldn't want me to have room enough to hide a pair of lovers under my hoops, now would you? That fashion won't last, I'm sure, some day the court ladies will give it up, and then every woman in town will make haste to follow their example Don't you think so?

LEONARD Yes! Yes! But

CATHERINE Now, about high heels . . . They must be made just right A woman is judged by her foot-gear—you can always tell a real fine lady by her shoes You agree with me, don't you, dear?

LEONARD Yes, yes, *yes*, but

CATHERINE Then write out your verdict I shan't say another word

LEONARD That's right (*Reading, and making notes*) "Now, the guard-

ian of the said young lady, namely, Hugo Thomas of Piédeloup, gentleman, stole from the said young lady her—"

CATHERINE My dear, if one were to believe the wife of the Chief Justice of Montbadon, the world has grown very corrupt, it is going to the bad, young men nowadays don't marry, they prefer to hang about rich old ladies, and meanwhile the poor girls are left to wither on their maiden stalks Do you think it's as bad as all that? Do answer me, dear

LEONARD My darling, won't you please be silent one moment? Or go and talk somewhere else? I'm all at sea

CATHERINE There, there, dear, don't worry I shan't say another word! Not a word!

LEONARD Good! (*Writing*) "The said Piédeloup, gentleman, counting both hay crops and apple crops."

CATHERINE My dear, we shall have for supper tonight some minced mutton and what's left of that goose one of your suitors gave us Tell me, is that enough? Shall you be satisfied with it? I hate being mean, and like to set a good table, but what's the use of serving courses which will only be sent back to the pantry untouched? The cost of living is getting higher all the time Chickens, and salads, and meats, and fruit have all gone up so, it will soon be cheaper to order dinner sent in by a caterer

LEONARD I beg you (*Writing*) "An orphan by birth"

CATHERINE Yes, that's what we're

coming to No home life any more You'll see Why, a capon, or a partridge, or a hare, cost less all stuffed and roasted than if you buy them alive at the market That is because the cook-shops buy in large quantities and get a big discount, so they can sell to us at a profit I don't say we ought to get our regular meals from the cook-shop We can do our everyday plain cooking at home, and it's better to, but when we invite people in, or give a formal dinner party, then it saves time and money to have the dinner sent in Why, at less than an hour's notice, the cook-shops and cake-shops will get you up a dinner for a dozen, or twenty, or fifty people, the cook-shop will send in meat and poultry, the caterer will send galantines and sauces and relishes, the pastry-cook will send pies and tarts and sweets and desserts, and it's all so convenient Now, don't you think so yourself, Leonard

LEONARD Please! please!

(LEONARD *tries to write through the following speech, murmuring* "An orphan by birth, a capon by birth, an olla podrida," etc)

CATHERINE It's no wonder everything goes up People are getting more extravagant every day If they are entertaining a friend, or even a relative, they don't think they can do with only three courses, soup, meat, and dessert No, they have to have meats in five or six different styles, with so many sauces, or dressings, or pastes, that it's a regular olla podrida Now, don't you think that is going too far, my dear? For my part I just cannot understand how people can take pleasure in stuffing themselves with so many kinds of food Not that I despise a

good table, why, I'm even a bit of an epicure myself "Not too plenty, but dainty," suits *my* taste Now, what I like best of all is capons' kidneys with artichoke hearts But you, Leonard, I suspect you have a weakness for tripe and sausages Oh, fie! Oh, fie! How can anyone enjoy sausages?

LEONARD (*his head in his hands*) I shall go mad! I know I shall go mad

CATHERINE (*running to the table behind him*) My dear, I just shan't say another word—not a single word For I can see that my chattering *might* possibly disturb your work

LEONARD If you would only do as you say!

CATHERINE (*returning to her place*) I shan't even open my lips

LEONARD Splendid!

CATHERINE (*busily embroidering*) You see, dear, I'm not saying another word

LEONARD Yes

CATHERINE I'm letting you work in perfect peace and quiet

LEONARD Yes

CATHERINE And write out your verdict quite undisturbed Is it almost done?

LEONARD It never will be—if you don't keep still (*Writing*) "Item, One hundred twenty pounds a year, which the said unworthy guardian stole from the poor orphan girl"

CATHERINE Listen! Ssh-sh! Listen! Didn't you hear a cry of fire? (LEONARD runs to the window, looks out, and then shakes his head at CATHERINE) I thought I did. But perhaps I may have been mistaken. Is there anything so terrifying as a fire? Fire is even worse than water. Last year I saw the houses on Exchange Bridge burn up. What confusion! What havoc! The people threw their furniture into the river, and jumped out of the windows. They didn't know what they were about, you see, fear drove them out of their senses.

LEONARD Lord, have mercy upon me!

CATHERINE Oh! What makes you groan so, dear? Tell me, tell me what is the matter?

LEONARD I can't endure it another minute.

CATHERINE You must rest, Leonard. You mustn't work so hard. It isn't reasonable. You have no right to.

LEONARD Will you never be still?

CATHERINE Now, don't be cross, dear. I'm not saying a word.

LEONARD Would to Heaven!
(MADAME DE LA BRUINE, followed by her FOOTMAN, crosses the stage during the following speech.)

CATHERINE (looking out of the window) Oh! Here comes Madame de la Bruine, the attorney's wife! She's got on a silk-lined hood and a heavy puce-colored cape over her brocade gown. And she has a lackey with a face like a smoked herring. Leon-

ard, she's looking this way, I believe she's coming to call. Hurry and arrange the chairs and bring up an armchair for her, we must show people proper respect according to their rank and station. She is stopping at our door. No, she's going on. She's gone on. Perhaps I was mistaken. Perhaps it was somebody else. You can't be sure about recognizing people. But if it wasn't she, it was somebody like her, and even very much like her. Now I think of it, I'm sure it was she, there simply couldn't be another woman in Paris so like Madame de la Bruine. My dear

My dear. Would you have liked to have Madame de la Bruine call on us? (She sits down on his table) I know you don't like rattle-tongued women, it's lucky for you that you didn't marry her, she jabbars like a magpie, she does nothing but gabble from morning to night. What a chatterbox! And sometimes she tells stories which are not to her credit. (LEONARD, driven beyond endurance, climbs upon his step-ladder and sits down on one of the middle steps, and tries to write there) In the first place, she always gives you a list of all the presents her husband has received. It's a dreadful bore to hear her tell them over. (She climbs up on the other side of the double step-ladder and sits down opposite LEONARD) What is it to us, if the Attorney de la Bruine receives presents of game, or flour, or fresh fish, or even a sugar-loaf? But Madame de la Bruine takes good care not to tell you that one day her husband received a great Amiens pasty, and when he opened it he found nothing but an enormous pair of horns.

LEONARD My head will burst! (He takes refuge on top of one of the

cabinets, with his writing-case and papers)

CATHERINE (*at the top of the ladder*) And did you see my fine lady, who's really no lady at all, wearing an embroidered cape, just like any princess? Don't you think it's ridiculous? But there! Nowadays everybody dresses above his station, men as well as women. Your court secretaries try to pass for gentlemen, they wear gold chains and jewelry, and feathers in their hats, all the same, anyone can tell what they are

LEONARD (*on top of his cupboard*) I've got to the point where I can't answer for the consequences, I feel capable of committing any crime (*Calling*) Giles! Giles! Giles! The scoundrel! Giles! Alison! Giles! Giles! (*Enter GILES*) Go quick and find the famous Doctor in Bucy Square, Master Simon Colline, and tell him to come back here at once for a matter far more needful and urgent than before

GILES Yes, your Honor (*Exit*)

CATHERINE What's the matter, my dear? You seem excited. Perhaps the air is close. No? It's the east wind, then, don't you think?—or the fish you ate for dinner?

LEONARD (*frantically gesticulating on top of his cupboard*) *Non omnia possumus omnes*. It is the office of servants to clean crockery, of merchants to measure ribbon, of monks to beg, of birds to drop dirt around everywhere, and of women to cackle and chatter like mad. Oh! How I regret, you saucy baggage, that I had your tongue loosed. Don't you worry, though—the famous doctor shall soon make you more dumb

than ever you were (*He catches up armfuls of the brief-bags which are piled on his cupboard of refuge, and throws them at CATHERINE'S head, she jumps nimbly down from the ladder and runs off in terror, crying*)

CATHERINE Help! Murder! My husband's gone mad! Help! help!

LEONARD Alison! Alison!
(*Enter ALISON*)

ALISON What a life! Sir, have you turned murderer?

LEONARD Alison, follow her, stay by her, and don't let her come down. As you value your life, Alison, don't let her come down. For if I hear another word from her, I shall go raving mad, and God knows what I might do to her—and to you. Go! Off with you!

(*ALISON goes upstairs. Enter MASTER ADAM, Mlle de la Garandière, and a LACKEY carrying a basket. LEONARD is still on top of the cabinet or book-case. MASTER ADAM and Mlle de la Garandière climb up on each side of the step-ladder. The LACKEY, with an enormous basket on his head, kneels in front, center*)

MASTER ADAM Permit me, your Honor, with the object of softening your heart and arousing your pity, to present before you this young orphan girl, despoiled by a grasping guardian, who implores you for justice. Her eyes will speak to your heart more eloquently than my voice. Mlle de la Garandière brings you her prayers and her tears, she adds thereunto one ham, two duck pies, a goose and two goslings. She ventures to hope in exchange for a favoring verdict,

LEONARD Mademoiselle, you arouse my interest Have you anything to add in defense of your case?

Mlle DE LA GARANDIÈRE You are only too kind, sir, I must rest my case on what my lawyer has just said

LEONARD That is all?

Mlle DE LA GARANDIÈRE Yes, sir

LEONARD She knows how to speak—and to stop The poor orphan touches my heart (*To the LACKEY*) carry that package to the pantry (*Exit LACKEY To MASTER ADAM*) Master Adam, when you came in, I was just drawing up the decree which I shall presently render in this young lady's case (*He starts to come down from his cabinet*)

MASTER ADAM What, up on that cupboard?

LEONARD I don't know where I am, my head is going round and round Do you want to hear the decree? I need to read it over myself (*Reading*) "Whereas, Mlle de la Garandière, spinster, and an orphan by birth, did fraudulently, deceitfully, and with injurious intent, steal, filch, and subtract from her lawful guardian, Squire Piédeloup, gentleman, ten loads of hay and eighty pounds of fresh-water fish, and whereas, there is nothing so terrifying as a fire, and whereas, the State's Attorney did receive an Amiens pasty in which were two great horns "

MASTER ADAM What in Heaven's name are you reading?

LEONARD Don't ask me I don't

know myself I think my brains have been brayed in a mortar, for two hours running, by the very devil himself for a pestle (*He breaks down and weeps on their shoulders*) I'm a driveling idiot And all your fault, too, Master Adam Fumée If that fine doctor of yours hadn't restored my wife's speech

MASTER ADAM Don't blame me, Master Leonard I forewarned you I told you right enough, that you must think twice before untying a woman's tongue

LEONARD Ah, Master Adam Fumée, how I long for the time when my Catherine was dumb No! Nature has no scourge more fearsome than a rattle-tongued female But I count on the doctors to recall their cruel gift I have sent for them. Here's the surgeon now (*Enter MASTER JEAN MAUGIER*)

MASTER JEAN MAUGIER Your Honor, I bid you good day Here is Master Simon Colline coming forward upon his mule, followed by Master Serafin Dulaunier, apothecary About him crowds the adoring populace chambermaids, trussing up their petticoats, and scullions with hampers on their heads form his escort of honor (*Enter MASTER SIMON COLLINE and MASTER SERAFIN DULAURIER followed by the two APOTHECARY'S BOYS*) Oh! how justly does Master Simon Colline command the admiration of the people when he goes through the city clad in his doctor's robe, his square cap, his cassock and bands Oh! how grateful we should be to those noble doctors who labor to preserve us in health and comfort us in sickness, Ohhhh! how .

MASTER SIMON (*to MASTER JEAN MAUGIER*) Have done, 'tis enough

LEONARD Master Simon Colline, I was in haste to see you I urgently beg for your services

MASTER SIMON For yourself? What is your disease? Where is the pain?

LEONARD No! for my wife, the one who was dumb

MASTER SIMON Has she any trouble now?

LEONARD None at all I have all the trouble now

MASTER SIMON What? The trouble is with you, and it's your wife you want cured?

LEONARD Master Simon Colline, she talks too much You should have given her speech, but not so much speech Since you've cured her of her dumbness, she drives me mad I cannot bear another word from her I've called you in to make her dumb again

MASTER SIMON 'Tis impossible!

LEONARD What's that? You can't take away the power of speech which you gave her?

MASTER SIMON No! That I cannot do My skill is great, but it stops short of that

(*LEONARD in despair turns to each of them in succession*)

MASTER JEAN MAUGIER We cannot do it

MASTER SERAFIN Our greatest efforts would have not the slightest result

MASTER SIMON We have medicines to make women speak, we have none to make them keep silence

LEONARD You haven't? Is that your last word? You drive me to despair

MASTER SIMON Alas, your Honor! (*He advances to the center, claps his hands for attention, and declaims*) There is no elixir, balm, magisterium, opiate, unguent, ointment, local application, electuary, nor panacea, that can cure the excess of glottal activity in woman Treacle and orvietano would be without virtue, and all the herbs described by Dioscorides would have no effect

LEONARD Can this be true?

MASTER SIMON Sir, you dare not so offend me as to doubt it

LEONARD Then I am a ruined man There's nothing left for me to do but tie a stone around my neck and jump into the Seine (*He rushes to the window and tries to jump out, but is held back by the doctors*) I cannot live in this hubbub (*The doctors drag him back, set him down, and, with MASTER ADAM, stand in a circle in front of him*) If you don't want me to drown myself straightway, then you doctors must find me some cure

MASTER SIMON There is none, I tell you, for your wife. But there might be one for you, if you would consent to take it

LEONARD You give me a little hope Explain it, for Heaven's sake

MASTER SIMON For the clack of a wife, there's but one cure in life Let

her husband be deaf 'Tis the only relief

LEONARD What do you mean?

MASTER SIMON Just what I say

MASTER ADAM Don't you understand? That's the finest discovery yet Since he can't make your wife dumb, this great doctor offers to make you deaf

LEONARD Make me really deaf? Oh!
(*He starts to rise, but is pushed back by MASTER SIMON, who stands directly in front of him*)

MASTER SIMON Certainly I can cure you at once, and for all time, of your wife's verbal hypertrophy, by means of cophosis

LEONARD By cophosis? What is cophosis?

MASTER SIMON 'Tis what is vulgarly called deafness Do you see any disadvantages in becoming deaf?

LEONARD Certainly I do!

MASTER JEAN MAUGIER You think so?

MASTER SERAFIN For instance?

MASTER SIMON You are a Judge What disadvantage is there in a Judge's being deaf?

MASTER ADAM None at all Believe me, I am a practicing lawyer There is none at all

MASTER SIMON What harm could come to justice thereby?

MASTER ADAM No harm at all

Quite the contrary Master Leonard Botal could then hear neither lawyers nor prosecutors, and so would run no risk of being deceived by a lot of lies

LEONARD That's true

MASTER ADAM He will judge all the better

LEONARD May be so.

MASTER ADAM Never doubt it

LEONARD But how do you perform this

MASTER JEAN MAUGIER This cure.

MASTER SIMON Cophosis, vulgarly called deafness, may be brought about in several ways It is produced either by otorrhoea, or by sclerosis of the ear, or by otitis, or else by ankylosis of the ossicles But these various means are long and painful

LEONARD I reject them! I reject them absolutely

MASTER SIMON You are right It is far better to induce cophosis by means of a certain white powder which I have in my medicine-case, a pinch of it, placed in the ear, is enough to make you as deaf as Heaven when it's angry, or as deaf as a post

LEONARD Many thanks, Master Simon Colline, keep your powder I will not be made deaf.

MASTER SIMON What? You won't be made deaf? What? You refuse cophosis? You decline the cure which you begged for just now? Ah, 'tis a

case but too common, and one calculated to make a judicious physician grieve, to see a recalcitrant patient refuse the salutary medication .

MASTER JEAN MAUGIER And flee from the care, which would cure all his ailments

MASTER SERAFIN And decline to be healed Oh!

MASTER ADAM Do not decide too quickly, Master Leonard Botal, do not deliberately reject this slight affliction which will save you from far greater torment

LEONARD No! I will not be deaf, I'll have none of your powder

ALISON (*rushes in from the stans, stopping her ears*) I can't stand it My head will burst No human creature can stay and listen to such a clatter There's no stopping her I feel as if I'd been caught in the mill-wheel for two mortal hours (*CATHERINE is heard off stage singing the BLIND MAN's song*)

LEONARD Wretch! Don't let her come down Alison! Giles! Lock her in

MASTER ADAM Oh! Sir!

MILLE DE LA GARANDIÈRE Oh! Sir, can your heart be so cruel as to want to lock the poor lady up all alone? (*CATHERINE is heard singing again* LEONARD starts for the ladder, and climbs it as she enters)

CATHERINE What a fine large assembly! I am your humble servant, gentlemen (*She curtsies*)

MASTER SIMON COLLINE Well, madam? Aren't you pleased with us? Didn't we do our work well in loosening your tongue?

CATHERINE Fairly well, sirs, and I'm truly grateful to you At first, to be sure, I could speak but haltingly, and bring out only a few words, now, however, I have some degree of facility, but I use it with great moderation, for a garrulous wife is a scourge in the house Yes, gentlemen, I should be in despair if you could so much as suspect me of loquacity, or if you think for a moment that any undue desire to talk could get hold on me (*LEONARD, on top of the cabinet, laughs wildly*) And so, I beg you to let me justify myself here and now in the eyes of my husband, who, for some inconceivable reason, has become prejudiced against me, and taken it into his head that my conversation bothered him while he was drawing up a decree Yes, a decree in favor of an orphan girl deprived of her father and mother in the flower of her youth But no matter for that (*She crosses to the ladder and starts to go up one side of it* LEONARD climbs down the other side, goes first to one doctor, then to another, and finally sits down on the bench in front of the table) I was sitting beside him and hardly saying a single word to him My only speech was my presence Can a husband object to that? Can he take it ill when his wife stays with him and seeks to enjoy his company, as she ought? (*She goes to her husband and sits down beside him* During the rest of the speech all those present, one after another, sink down in exhaustion at listening to her) The more I think of it, the less I can understand your impatience What

can have caused it? You must stop pretending it was my talkativeness. That idea won't hold water one moment. My dear, you must have some grievance against me which I know nothing about, I *beg* you to tell me what it is. You *owe* me an explanation, and as soon as I find out what displeased you I will see to it that you have no reason to complain of the same thing again—if only you'll tell me what it is. For I am eager to save you from the slightest reason for dissatisfaction. My mother used to say "Between husband and wife, there should be no secrets." And she was quite right. Married people have only too often brought down terrible catastrophes on themselves or their households just because they didn't tell each other everything. That is what happened to the Chief Justice of Beaupréau's wife. To give her husband a pleasant surprise, she shut up a little sucking pig in a chest in her room. Her husband heard it squealing, and thought it was a lover, so he out with his sword and ran his wife through the heart, without even waiting to hear the poor lady's explanation. You can imagine his surprise and despair when he opened the chest. And that shows you must never have secrets, even for good reasons. My dear, you can speak freely before these gentlemen. I know I have done nothing wrong, so whatever you say can only prove the more clearly how innocent I am.

LEONARD (*who has for some time been trying in vain by gestures and exclamations to stop CATHERINE'S flow of words, and has been showing signs of extreme impatience*) The powder! Give me the powder! Master Simon Colline, your powder

—your white powder, for God's sake!

MASTER SIMON Never was a deafness-producing powder more needed, that's sure. Be so kind as to sit down, your Honor. Master Serafin Dulaurier will inject the cophosis powder in your ears. (*The DOCTORS crowd about LEONARD, and inject the powder first in one ear and then in the other*)

MASTER SERAFIN Gladly, sir, gladly.

MASTER SIMON There! 'Tis done.

CATHERINE (*to MASTER ADAM FUMÉE*) Master Adam, you are a lawyer. Make my husband hear reason. Tell him that he must listen to me, that it's unheard of to condemn a wife without letting her state her case, tell him it's not right to throw brief-bags at your wife's head—yes, he threw brief-bags at my head—unless you are forced to it by some very strong feeling or reason. Or no!—no, I'll tell him myself. (*To LEONARD*) My dear, answer me, have I ever failed you in anything? Am I a naughty woman? Am I a bad wife? No, I have been faithful to my duty, I may even say I have loved my duty.

LEONARD (*his face expressing beatitude, as he calmly twirls his thumbs*) 'Tis delicious. I can't hear a thing.

CATHERINE Listen to me, Leonard, I love you tenderly. I will open my heart to you. I am not one of those light, frivolous women who are afflicted or consoled by airy nothings, and amused by trifles. (*She puts her arms about him and they rock back and forth, LEONARD grinning*)

from ear to ear) I need companionship I need to be understood That is my nature—I was born so When I was only seven years old I had a little dog, a little yellow dog But you're not listening to me

MASTER SIMON Madam, he can't listen to you, or to anyone else He can't hear

CATHERINE What do you mean he can't hear?

MASTER SIMON I mean just that He can't hear, as the result of a cure he has just taken

(The BLIND MAN is heard again, playing the same air)

MASTER SERAFIN A cure which has produced in him a sweet and pleasant cophosis

CATHERINE I'll make him hear, I tell you

MASTER SIMON No, you won't, madam, it can't be done

CATHERINE You shall see *(To her husband, affectionately)* My dear, my beloved, my pretty one, my sweetheart, my better-half You don't hear me? *(She shakes him)* You monster, you Herod, you Blue-beard, you old cuckold

LEONARD I can't hear her with my ears, but I hear her only too well with my arms, and with my shoulders and back

MASTER SIMON She is going mad

MASTER MAUGIER She has gone mad! Stark staring mad!

LEONARD Oh! How can I get away? *(CATHERINE bites his neck)* Oh! She has bitten me, I feel myself going mad, too.

(The BLIND MAN has come forward, playing and singing the first verse of his song Meanwhile CATHERINE and LEONARD go singing and dancing about, and bite the others, who likewise go mad and sing and dance wildly, all at the front of the stage The other characters of the play come in—the CANDLE MAN, CHIMNEY SWEEP, MADAME DE LA BRUINE, etc., all are caught and bitten, and join in the song and the dance, which resolves itself into the old-fashioned country "right and left," as they sing the second verse)

ALL

*Along the rippling river's bank,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
Along the wimpling water's bank,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
Along the bank so shady O
I met the miller's lady O
And danced with her the lvelong day,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
And oh! I danced my heart away,
La dee ra, dee ra, day*

(As LEONARD BOTAL reaches the center of the front stage, the dance stops a moment for him to say to the audience)

LEONARD Good gentlemen and ladies, we pray you to forgive the author all his faults
(The dance re-commences, and as the curtain falls all dance off left or right, singing the refrain)

ALL *(diminuendo)*

*I danced with her the lvelong day,
La dee ra, la dee ra,
And oh! I danced my heart away;
La dee ra, dee ra, day*

CURTAIN

Miss Julie

BY AUGUST STRINDBERG

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CHARACTERS

MISS JULIE, *aged twenty-five*

JOHN, *a servant, aged thirty*

CHRISTINE, *a cook, aged thirty-five*

MISS JULIE

The action of the play takes place on Midsummer Night, in the Count's kitchen

CHRISTINE stands on the left, by the hearth, and fries something in a pan. She has on a light blouse and a kitchen apron. JOHN comes in through the glass door in livery. He holds in his hand a pair of big riding boots with spurs, which he places on the floor at the back, in a visible position.

JOHN Miss Julie is mad again to-night—absolutely mad!

she feels herself a little embarrassed after the affair with her young man

CHRISTINE Oh! And so you're here, are you?

JOHN Maybe, but at any rate he was a good chap. Do you know, Christine, how it came about? I saw the whole show, though I didn't let them see that I noticed anything.

JOHN I accompanied the Count to the station, and when I passed the barn on my way back I went in to have a dance. At that time Miss Julie was dancing with that man Forster. When she noticed me, she made straight for me and asked me to be her partner in the waltz, and from that moment she danced in a way such as I've never seen anything of the kind before. She is simply crazy.

CHRISTINE What! You saw it?

CHRISTINE She's always been that, but never as much as in the last fortnight, since the engagement was broken off.

JOHN Yes, that I did. They were one evening down there in the stable, and the young lady was "training" him, as she called it. What do you think she was doing? She made him jump over the riding whip like a dog which one is teaching to hop. He jumped over twice, and each time he got a cut, but the third time he snatched her riding whip out of her hand, smashed it into smithereens and—cleared out.

JOHN Yes, what an affair that was, to be sure. The man was certainly a fine fellow, even though he didn't have much cash. Well, to be sure, they have so many whims and fancies. *(He sits down at the right by the table)* In any case, it's strange that the young lady should prefer to stay at home with the servants rather than to accompany her father to her relations', isn't it?

CHRISTINE Was that it? No, you can't mean it?

JOHN Yes, that was how it happened. Can't you give me something nice to eat now, Christine?

CHRISTINE *(takes up the pan and puts it before JOHN)* Well, there's only a little bit of liver, which I've cut off the joint.

CHRISTINE Yes. The odds are that

JOHN *(snuffs the food)* Ah, very

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nice, that's my special dish (*He feels the plate*) But you might have warmed up the plate

CHRISTINE Why, you're even more particular than the Count himself, once you get going (*She draws her fingers caressingly through his hair*)

JOHN (*wickedly*) Ugh, you mustn't excite me like that, you know jolly well how sensitive I am

CHRISTINE There, there now, it was only because I love you

JOHN (*eats* CHRISTINE gets out a bottle of beer) Beer on Midsummer's Night! Not for me, thank you I can go one better than that myself (*He opens the sideboard and takes out a bottle of red wine with a yellow label*) Yellow label, do you see, dear? Just give me a glass A wineglass, of course, when a fellow's going to drink neat wine

CHRISTINE (*turns again toward the fireplace and puts a small saucepan on*) God pity the woman who ever gets you for a husband, a growler like you!

JOHN Oh, don't jaw! You'd be only too pleased if you only got a fellow like me, and I don't think for a minute that you're in any way put out by my being called your best boy (*Tastes the wine*) Ah! very nice, very nice Not quite mellowed enough though, that's the only thing (*He warms the glass with his hand*) We bought this at Dijon It came to four francs the liter, without the glass, and then there was the duty as well What are you cooking there now? It makes the most infernal stink?

CHRISTINE Oh, that's just some asafœtida, which Miss Julie wants to have for Diana

JOHN You ought to express yourself a little more prettily, Christine Why have you got to get up on a holiday evening and cook for the brute? Is it ill, eh?

CHRISTINE Yes, it is It slunk out to the dog in the courtyard, and there it played the fool, and the young lady doesn't want to know anything about it, do you see?

JOHN Yes, in one respect the young lady is too proud, and in another not proud enough Just like the Countess was when she was alive She felt most at home in the kitchen, and in the stable, but she would never ride a horse, she'd go about with dirty cuffs, but insisted on having the Count's coronet on the buttons. The young lady, so far now as she is concerned, doesn't take enough trouble about either herself or her person, in a manner of speaking, she is not refined Why, only just now, when she was dancing in the barn, she snatched Forster away from Anna, and asked him to dance with herself We wouldn't behave like that, but that's what happens when the gentry make themselves cheap Then they are cheap, and no mistake about it But she is real stately! Superb! Whew! What shoulders, what a bust and——

CHRISTINE Ye-e-s, but she makes up a good bit, too I know what Clara says, who helps her to dress

JOHN Oh, Clara! You women are always envious of each other I've been out with her and seen her ride, and then how she dances!

CHRISTINE I say, John, won't you dance with me when I'm ready?

JOHN Of course I will

CHRISTINE Promise me?

JOHN Promise? If I say I'll do a thing, then I always do it Anyway, thanks very much for the food, it was damned good (*He puts the cork back into the bottle The young lady, at the glass door, speaks to people outside*) I'll be back in a minute (*He conceals the bottle of wine in a napkin, and stands up respectfully*)

JULIE (*enters and goes to CHRISTINE by the fireplace*) Well, is it ready?

(*CHRISTINE intimates to her by signs that JOHN is present*)

JOHN (*gallantly*) Do the ladies want to talk secrets?

JULIE (*strikes him in the face with her handkerchief*) Is he inquisitive?

JOHN Ah! what a nice smell of violets

JULIE (*coquettishly*) Impudent person! Is the fellow then an expert in perfumes? (*She goes behind the table*)

JOHN (*with gentle affectation*) Have you ladies then been brewing a magic potion this Midsummer Night? Something so as to be able to read one's fortunes in the stars, so that you get a sight of the future?

JULIE (*sharply*) Yes, if he manages to see that, he must have very good eyes (*To CHRISTINE*) Pour it into a

half bottle and cork it securely Let the man come now and dance the schottische with me John? (*She lets her handkerchief fall on the table*)

JOHN (*hesitating*) I don't want to be disobliging to anybody, but I promised Christine this dance

JULIE Oh, well, she can get somebody else (*She goes to CHRISTINE*) What do you say, Christine? Won't you lend me John?

CHRISTINE I haven't got any say in the matter If you are so condescending, Miss, it wouldn't at all do for him to refuse You just go and be grateful for such an honor

JOHN Speaking frankly, and without meaning any offence, do you think it's quite wise, Miss Julie, to dance twice in succession with the same gentleman, particularly as the people here are only too ready to draw all kinds of conclusions?

JULIE (*explodes*) What do you mean? What conclusion? What does the man mean?

JOHN (*evasively*) As you won't understand me, Miss, I must express myself more clearly It doesn't look well to prefer one of your inferiors to others who expect the same exceptional honor

JULIE Prefer? What idea is the man getting into his head? I am absolutely astonished I, the mistress of the house, honor my servants' dance with my presence, and if I actually want to dance I want to do it with a man who can steer, so that I haven't got the bore of being laughed at

JOHN I await your orders, Miss, I am at your service

JULIE (*softly*) Don't talk now of orders, this evening we're simply merry men and women at a revel, and we lay aside all rank Give me your arm, don't be uneasy, Christine, I'm not going to entice your treasure away from you

(JOHN offers her his arm and leads her through the glass door CHRISTINE alone Faint violin music at some distance to schottische time CHRISTINE keeps time with the music, clears the table where JOHN had been eating, washes the plate at the side-table, dries it and puts it in the cupboard She then takes off her kitchen apron, takes a small mirror out of the table drawer, puts it opposite the basket of lilacs, lights a taper, heats a harpin, with which she curls her front hair, then she goes to the glass door and washes, comes back to the table, finds the young lady's handkerchief, which she has forgotten, takes it and smells it, she then pensively spreads it out, stretches it flat and folds it in four JOHN comes back alone through the glass door)

JOHN Yes, she is mad, to dance like that, and everybody stands by the door and grins at her What do you say about it, Christine?

CHRISTINE Ah, it's just her time, and then she always takes on so strange But won't you come now and dance with me?

JOHN You aren't offended with me that I cut your last dance?

CHRISTINE No, not the least bit, you know that well enough, and I know my place besides

JOHN (*puts his hand round her waist*) You're a sensible girl, Christine, and you'd make an excellent housekeeper

JULIE (*comes in through the glass door She is disagreeably surprised With forced humor*) Charming cavalier you are, to be sure, to run away from your partner

JOHN On the contrary, Miss Julie, I've been hurrying all I know, as you see, to find the girl I left behind me

JULIE Do you know, none of the others dance like you do But why do you go about in livery on a holiday evening? Take it off at once

JOHN In that case, Miss, I must ask you to leave me for a moment, because my black coat hangs up here (*He goes with a corresponding gesture toward the right*)

JULIE Is he bashful on my account? Just about changing a coat! Is he going into his room and coming back again? So far as I am concerned he can stay here, I'll turn round

JOHN By your leave, Miss (*He goes to the left, his arm is visible when he changes his coat*)

JULIE (*to CHRISTINE*) I say, Christine, is John your sweetheart, that he's so thick with you?

CHRISTINE (*going toward the fireplace*) My sweetheart? Yes, if you like We call it that

JULIE Call it?

CHRISTINE Well, you yourself, Miss, had a sweetheart and—

JULIE Yes, we were properly engaged

CHRISTINE But nothing at all came of it (*She sits down and gradually goes to sleep*)

(*JOHN in a black coat and with a black hat*)

JULIE Très gentil, Monsieur Jean, très gentil!

JOHN Vous voulez plaisanter, madame!

JULIE Et vous voulez parler Français? And where did you pick that up?

JOHN In Switzerland, when I was a waiter in one of the best hotels in Lucerne

JULIE But you look quite like a gentleman in that coat Charming (*She sits down on the right, by the table*)

JOHN Ah! you're flattering me

JULIE (*offended*) Flatter? You?

JOHN My natural modesty won't allow me to imagine that you're paying true compliments to a man like me, so I took the liberty of supposing that you're exaggerating or, in a manner of speaking, flattering

JULIE Where did you learn to string your words together like that? You must have been to the theater a great deal?

JOHN Quite right I've been to no end of places

JULIE But you were born here in this neighborhood

JOHN My father was odd man to the State attorney of this parish, and I saw you, Miss, when you were a child, although you didn't notice me

JULIE Really?

JOHN Yes, and I remember one incident in particular Um, yes—I mustn't speak about that

JULIE Oh, yes—you tell me What? Just to please me

JOHN No, really I can't now Perhaps some other time

JULIE Some other time means never Come, is it then so dangerous to tell me now?

JOHN It's not dangerous, but it's much best to leave it alone Just look at her over there (*He points to CHRISTINE, who has gone to sleep in a chair by the fireplace*)

JULIE She'll make a cheerful wife Perhaps she snores as well

JOHN She doesn't do that—she speaks in her sleep

JULIE How do you know that she speaks in her sleep?

JOHN I've heard it
(*Pause—in which they look at each other*)

JULIE Why don't you sit down?

JOHN I shouldn't take such a liberty in your presence

JULIE And if I order you to—

JOHN Then I obey

JULIE Sit down, but, wait a moment, can't you give me something to drink?

JOHN I don't know what's in the refrigerator I don't think there's anything except beer

JULIE That's not to be sniffed at Personally I'm so simple in my tastes that I prefer it to wine

JOHN (*takes a bottle out of the refrigerator and draws the cork, he looks in the cupboard for a glass and plate, on which he serves the beer*) May I offer you some?

JULIE Thanks Won't you have some as well?

JOHN I'm not what you might call keen on beer, but if you order me, Miss——

JULIE Order? It seems to me that as a courteous cavalier you might keep your partner company

JOHN A very sound observation (*He opens another bottle and takes a glass*)

JULIE Drink my health! (JOHN *hesitates*) I believe the old duffer is bashful

JOHN (*on his knees, mock heroically, lifts up his glass*) The health of my mistress!

JULIE Bravo! Now, as a finishing touch, you must kiss my shoe (JOHN *hesitates, then catches sharply hold of her foot and kisses it lightly*) First rate! You should have gone on the stage

JOHN (*gets up*) This kind of thing

mustn't go any further, Miss Anybody might come in and see us

JULIE What would it matter?

JOHN People would talk, and make no bones about what they said either, and if you knew, Miss, how their tongues have already been wagging, then——

JULIE What did they say then? Tell me, but sit down

JOHN (*sits down*) I don't want to hurt you, but you made use of expressions—which pointed to innuendoes of such a kind—yes, you'll understand this perfectly well yourself You're not a child any more, and, if a lady is seen to drink alone with a man—even if it's only a servant, *tête-à-tête* at night—then——

JULIE What then? And, besides, we're not alone Christine is here

JOHN Yes, asleep

JULIE Then I'll wake her up (*She gets up*) Christine, are you asleep?

CHRISTINE (*in her sleep*) Bla—bla—bla—bla

JULIE Christine! The woman can go on sleeping

CHRISTINE (*in her sleep*) The Count's boots are already done—put the coffee out—at once, at once, at once—oh, oh—ah!

JULIE (*takes hold of her by the nose*) Wake up, will you?

JOHN (*harshly*) You mustn't disturb a person who's asleep.

JULIE (*sharply*) What?

JOHN A person who's been on her legs all day by the fireplace will naturally be tired when night comes, and sleep should be respected

JULIE (*in another tone*) That's a pretty thought, and does you credit—thank you (*She holds her hand out to JOHN*) Come out now and pick some clover for me (*During the subsequent dialogue CHRISTINE wakes up, and exits in a dazed condition to the right, to go to bed*)

JOHN With you, Miss?

JULIE With me

JOHN It's impossible, absolutely impossible.

JULIE I don't understand what you mean Can it be possible that you imagine such a thing for a single minute?

JOHN Me—no, but the people—yes

JULIE What! That I should be in love with a servant?

JOHN I'm not by any means an educated man, but there have been cases, and nothing is sacred to the people

JULIE I do believe the man is an aristocrat

JOHN Yes, that I am

JULIE And I'm on the down path

JOHN Don't go down, Miss Take my advice, nobody will believe that you went down of your own free will People will always say you fell

JULIE I have a better opinion of people than you have Come and try Come (*She challenges him with her eyes*)

JOHN You are strange, you know

JULIE Perhaps I am, but so are you, Besides, everything is strange Life, men, the whole thing is simply an iceberg which is driven out on the water until it sinks—sinks I have a dream which comes up now and again, and now it haunts me I am sitting on the top of a high pillar and can't see any possibility of getting down, I feel dizzy when I look down, but I have to get down all the same I haven't got the pluck to throw myself off I can't keep my balance and I want to fall over, but I don't fall And I don't get a moment's peace until I'm down below No rest until I've got to the ground, and when I've got down to the ground I want to get right into the earth Have you ever felt anything like that?

JOHN No, I usually dream I'm lying under a high tree in a gloomy forest I want to get up right to the top and look round at the light landscape where the sun shines, and plunder the birds' nests where the golden eggs lie, and I climb and climb, but the trunk is so thick and so smooth, and it's such a long way to the first branch, but I know, if only I can get to the first branch, I can climb to the top, as though it were a ladder I haven't got there yet, but I must get there, even though it were only in my dreams

JULIE And here I am now standing chattering to you Come along now, just out into the park (*She offers him her arm and they go*)

JOHN We must sleep tonight on nine Midsummer Night herbs, then our dreams will come true
(*Both turn round in the doorway*
JOHN holds his hand before one of his eyes)

JULIE Let me see what's got into your eye

JOHN Oh, nothing, only a bit of dust—it'll be all right in a minute

JULIE It was the sleeve of my dress that grazed you. Just sit down, and I'll help you get it out. (*She takes him by the arm and makes him sit down on the table. She then takes his hand and presses it down, and tries to get the dust out with the corner of her handkerchief.*) Be quite still, quite still! (*She strikes him on the hand.*) There! Will he be obedient now? I do believe the great strong man's trembling. (*She feels his arm.*) With arms like that!

JOHN (*warningly*) Miss Julie

JULIE Yes, Monsieur Jean

JOHN Attention! Je ne suis qu'un homme!

JULIE Won't he sit still? See! It's out now! Let him kiss my hand and thank me

JOHN (*stands up*) Miss Julie, listen to me. Christine has cleared out and gone to bed. Won't you listen to me?

JULIE Kiss my hand first

JOHN Listen to me

JULIE Kiss my hand first

JOHN All right, but you must be responsible for the consequences

JULIE What consequences?

JOHN What consequences? Don't you know it's dangerous to play with fire?

JULIE Not for me. I am insured!

JOHN (*sharply*) No, you're not! And even if you were, there's inflammable material pretty close

JULIE Do you mean yourself?

JOHN Yes. Not that I'm particularly dangerous, but I'm just a young man!

JULIE With an excellent appearance—what incredible vanity! Don Juan, I suppose, or a Joseph. I believe, on my honor, the man's a Joseph!

JOHN Do you believe that?

JULIE I almost fear it. (*JOHN goes brutally toward and tries to embrace her, so as to kiss her.*) JULIE boxes his ears! Hands off!

JOHN Are you serious or joking?

JULIE Serious

JOHN In that case, what took place before was also serious. You're taking the game much too seriously, and that's dangerous. But I'm tired of the game now, so would you please excuse me so that I can go back to my work? (*He goes to the back of the stage, to the boots.*) The Count must have his boots early, and midnight is long past. (*He takes up the boots.*)

JULIE Leave the boots alone

JOHN No It's my duty, and I'm bound to do it, but I didn't take on the job of being your playmate Besides, the thing is out of the question, as I consider myself much too good for that kind of thing

JULIE You're proud

JOHN In some cases, not in others

JULIE Have you ever loved?

JOHN We people don't use that word But I've liked many girls, and once it made me quite ill not to be able to get the girl I wanted, as ill, mind you, as the princes in "The Arabian Nights," who are unable to eat or drink out of pure love (*He takes up the boots again*)

JULIE Who was it?

(JOHN is silent)

JOHN You can't compel me to tell you

JULIE If I ask you as an equal, as—a friend? Who was it?

JOHN You!

JULIE (*sits down*) How funny!

JOHN And if you want to hear the story, here goes! It was humorous This is the tale, mind you, which I would not tell you before, but I'll tell you right enough now Do you know how the world looks from down below? No, of course you don't Like hawks and eagles, whose backs a man can scarcely ever see because they're always flying in the air I grew up in my father's hovel along with seven sisters and—a pig

—out there on the bare gray field, where there wasn't a single tree growing, and I could look out from the window on to the walls of the Count's parks, with its apple-trees That was my Garden of Eden, and many angels stood there with a flaming sword and guarded it, but all the same I, and other boys, found my way to the Tree of Life—Do you despise me?

JULIE Oh, well—stealing apples? All boys do that

JOHN That's what you say, but you despise me all the same Well, what's the odds! Once I went with my mother inside the garden, to weed out the onion bed Close by the garden wall there stood a Turkish pavilion, shaded by jasmine and surrounded by wild roses I had no idea what it was used for, but I'd never seen so fine a building People went in and out, and one day the door stood open I sneaked in, and saw the walls covered with pictures of queens and emperors, and red curtains with fringes were in front of the windows—now you know what I mean I— (*He takes a lilac branch and holds it under the young lady's nose*) I'd never been in the Abbey, and I'd never seen anything else but the church—but this was much finer, and wherever my thoughts roamed they always came back again to it, and then little by little the desire sprang up in me to get to know, some time, all this magnificence *Enfin*, I sneaked in, saw and wondered, but then somebody came There was, of course, only one way out for the gentry, but I found another one, and, again, I had no choice (JULIE, who has taken up the lilac branch, lets it fall on the table) So I flew, and rushed

through a lilac bush, clambered over a garden bed and came out by a terrace of roses. I there saw a light dress and a pair of white stockings—that was you. I laid down under a heap of herbage, right under them. Can you imagine it?—under thistles which stung me and wet earth which stank, and I looked at you where you came between the roses, and I thought if it is true that a murderer can get into the kingdom of heaven, and remain among the angels, it is strange if here, on God's own earth, a poor lad like me can't get into the Abbey park and play with the Count's daughter.

JULIE (*sentimentally*) Don't you think that all poor children under similar circumstances have had the same thoughts?

JOHN (*at first hesitating, then in a tone of conviction*) That all poor children—yes—of course. Certainly.

JULIE Being poor must be an infinite misfortune.

JOHN (*with deep pain*) Oh, Miss Julie. Oh! A dog can lie on the Count's sofa, a horse can be petted by a lady's hand, on its muzzle, but a boy! (*With a change of tone*) Yes, yes, a man of individuality here and there may have enough stuff in him to come to the top, but how often is that the case? What do you think I did then?—I jumped into the mill-stream, clothes and all, but was fished out and given a thrashing. But the next Sunday, when father and all of the people at home went to grandmother's, I managed to work it that I stayed at home, and I then had a wash with soap and warm water, put on my Sunday clothes and went to church, where

I could get a sight of you. I saw you and went home determined to die, but I wanted to die in a fine and agreeable way, without pain, and I then got the idea that it was dangerous to sleep under a lilac bush. We had one which at that time was in full bloom. I picked all the blooms which it had and then lay down in the oat bin. Have you ever noticed how smooth the oats are? As soft to the hand as human skin. I then shut the lid, and at last went to sleep and woke up really very ill, but I didn't die, as you see. I don't know what I really wanted, there was no earthly possibility of winning you. But you were a proof for me of the utter hopelessness of escaping from the circle in which I'd been born.

JULIE You tell a story charmingly, don't you know. Have you been to school?

JOHN A little, but I've read a lot of novels, and been a lot to the theater. Besides, I've heard refined people talk, and I've learned most from them.

JULIE Do you listen, then, to what we say?

JOHN Yes, that's right, and I've picked up a great deal when I've sat on the coachman's box or been rowing the boat. I once heard you, Miss, and a young lady friend of yours.

JULIE Really? What did you hear then?

JOHN Well, that I can't tell you, but I was really somewhat surprised, and I couldn't understand where you'd learned all the words from.

Perhaps at bottom there isn't so great a difference between class and class as one thinks

JULIE Oh, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! We are not like you are, and we have someone whom we love best

JOHN (*fixes her with his eyes*) Are you so sure of that? You needn't make yourself out so innocent, Miss, on my account

JULIE The man to whom I gave my love was a scoundrel

JOHN Girls always say that—afterward

JULIE Always?

JOHN Always, I think I've certainly already heard the phrase on several previous occasions, in similar circumstances

JULIE What circumstances?

JOHN The last time——

JULIE Stop! I won't hear any more

JOHN She wouldn't either—it's remarkable Oh, well, will you excuse me if I go to bed?

JULIE (*tartly*) Go to bed on Midsummer Night?

JOHN Yes Dance out there with the riff-raff, that doesn't amuse me the least bit

JULIE Take the key of the boat-house and row me out on the lake. I want to see the sun rise

JOHN Is that sensible?

JULIE It seems you're concerned about your reputation

JOHN Why not? I'm not keen on making myself look ridiculous, nor on being kicked out without a reference, if I want to set up on my own, and it seems to me I have certain obligations to Christine

JULIE Oh, indeed! So it's Christine again?

JOHN Yes, but it's on your account as well Take my advice and go up and go to bed

JULIE Shall I obey you?

JOHN This once for your own sake, I ask you, it's late at night, sleepiness makes one dazed, and one's blood boils You go and lie down Besides, if I can believe my ears, people are coming to find me, and if we are found here you are lost (*Chorus is heard in the distance and gets nearer*)

*"She pleases me like one o'clock,
My pretty young ldee,
For thoughts of her my bosom
block,
Her servant must I be,
For she delights my heart,
Tritidi—ralla, tritidi—ra!"*

*"And now I've won the match,
For which I've long been trying,
The other swains go flying,
But she comes up to scratch,
My pretty young ldee,
Tritidi—ralla—la—la!"*

JULIE I know our people, and I like them—just in the same way that they like me Just let them come, then you'll see

JOHN No, Miss Julie The folks don't love you They eat your bread, but they make fun of you behind your back You take it from me Listen, just listen, to what they're singing No, you'd better not listen

JULIE (*listens*) What are they singing?

JOHN It's some nasty lines about you and me

JULIE Horrible! Ugh, what sneaks they are!

JOHN The riff-raff is always cowardly, and in the fight it's best to fly

JULIE Fly? But where to? We can't go out, and we can't go up to Christine's room either

JOHN Then come into my room Necessity knows no law, and you can rely on my being your real, sincere and respectful friend

JULIE But just think, would they look for you there?

JOHN I'll bolt the door, and if they try to break it in I'll shoot Come (*On his knees*) Come!

JULIE (*significantly*) Promise me

JOHN On my oath!
(*JULIE rushes off on the left JOHN follows her in a state of excitement Pantomime Wedding party in holiday clothes, with flowers round their hats and a violin player at their head, come in through the glass door Barrel of small beer and a keg of brandy wreathed with laurel are placed on the table They take up glasses, they then drink, they then make a ring and a dance is sung and*

executed Then they go out, singing again, through the glass door JULIE comes in alone from the left, observes the disorder in the kitchen and claps her hands, she then takes out a powder puff and powders her face JOHN follows after the young woman from the left, in a state of exaltation)

JOHN There, do you see, you've seen it for yourself now You think it possible to go on staying here?

JULIE No, I don't any more But what's to be done?

JOHN Run away—travel, far away from here

JULIE Travel? Yes, but where?

JOHN Sweden—the Italian lakes, you've never been there, have you?

JULIE No, is it nice there?

JOHN Oh! A perpetual summer—oranges, laurels Whew!

JULIE What are we to start doing afterward?

JOHN We shall start a first-class hotel there, with first-class visitors

JULIE An hotel?

JOHN That's a life, to be sure, you take it from me—an endless succession of new sights, new languages, not a minute to spare for sulking or brooding, no looking for work, for the work comes of its own The bell goes on ringing day and night, the tram puffs, the omnibus comes and goes, while the gold pieces roll into the till That's a life, to be sure!

JULIE Yes, that's what *you* call life, but what about me?

JOHN The mistress of the house, the ornament of the firm, with your appearance and your manners—oh! success is certain Splendid! You sit like a queen in the counting house, and set all your slaves in motion, with a single touch of your electric bell, the visitors pass in procession by your throne, lay their treasure respectfully on your table, you've got no idea how men tremble when they take a bill up in their hand—I'll touch up the bills, and you must sugar them with your sweetest laugh Ah, let's get away from here (*He takes a time-table out of his pocket*) Right away by the next train, by six-thirty we're at Malmo, at eight-forty in the morning at Hamburg, Frankfort—one day in Basle and in Como by the St Gothard Tunnel in—let's see—three days Only three days

JULIE That all sounds very nice, but, John, you must give me courage, dear Tell me that you love me, dear, come and take me in your arms

JOHN (*hesitating*) I should like to—but I dare not—not here in the house I love you, no doubt about it—can you have any real doubt about it, Miss?

JULIE (*with real feminine shame*) Miss? Say "Dear" There are no longer any barriers between us—say "Dear"

JOHN (*in a hurt tone*) I can't There are still barriers between us so long as we remain in this house there is the past—there is my master the Count, I never met a man

whom I've respected so much—I've only got to see his gloves lying on a chair and straight away I feel quite small, I've only got to hear the bell up there and I dash away like a startled horse and—I've only got to see his boots standing there, so proud and upright, and I've got a pain inside (*He pushes the boots with his feet*) Superstition, prejudice, which have been inoculated into us since our childhood, but which one can't get rid of But only come to another country, to a republic, and I'll make people go on their knees before my porter's livery—on their knees, do you hear? You'll see But not me I'm not made to go on my knees, for I've got grit in me, character, and, once I get on to the first branch, you'll see me climb right up Today I'm a servant, but next year I shall be the proprietor of a hotel, in ten years I shall be independent, then I'll take a trip to Roumania and get myself decorated, and may—note that I say may—finish up as a count

JULIE Good! Good!

JOHN Oh, yes, the title of Count is to be bought in Roumania, and then you will be a countess—my countess

JULIE Tell me that you love me, dear, if you don't—why, what am I, if you don't?

JOHN I'll tell you a thousand times later on, but not here And above all, no sentimentalism, if everything isn't to go smash We must look at the matter quietly, like sensible people (*He takes out a cigar, cuts off the end, and lights it*) You sit there, I'll sit here, then we'll have a little chat just as though nothing had happened

JULIE O my God! have you no feeling then?

JOHN Me? There's no man who has more feeling than I have, but I can control myself

JULIE A short time back you could kiss my shoe—and now?

JOHN (*brutally*) Yes, a little while ago, but now we've got something else to think of

JULIE Don't talk brutally to me

JOHN No, but I'll talk sense We've made fools of ourselves once, don't let's do it again The Count may turn up any minute and we've got to map out our lives in advance What do you think of my plans for the future? Do you agree?

JULIE They seem quite nice, but one question—you need large capital for so great an undertaking—have you got it?

JOHN (*going on smoking*) Have I got it? Of course I have I've got my special knowledge, my exceptional experience, my knowledge of languages, that's a capital which is worth something, seems to me

JULIE But we can't buy a single railway ticket with all that

JOHN That's true enough, and so I'll look for somebody who can put up the money

JULIE Where can you find a man like that all at once?

JOHN Then you'll have to find him, if you're going to be my companion.

JULIE I can't do that, and I've got nothing myself (*Pause*)

JOHN In that case the whole scheme collapses

JULIE And?

JOHN Things remain as they are now

JULIE Do you think I'll go on staying any longer under this roof as your mistress? Do you think I will let the people point their finger at me? Do you think that after this I can look my father in the face? No! Take me away from here, from all this humiliation and dishonor! O my God! What have I done! O my God! My God! (*She cries*)

JOHN Ho—ho! So that's the game—what have you done? Just the same as a thousand other people like you

JULIE (*screams as though in a paroxysm*) And now you despise me? I'm falling, I'm falling!

JOHN Fall down to my level and then I'll lift you up again afterward

JULIE What awful power dragged me down to you, the power which draws the weak to the strong?—which draws him who falls to him who rises? Or was it love?—love—this! Do you know what love is?

JOHN If? Do you really suggest that I meant that? Don't you think I'd have felt it already long ago?

JULIE What phrases, to be sure, and what thoughts!

JOHN That's what I learned and that's what I am But just keep your nerve and don't play the fine lady We've got into a mess and we've got

to get out of it Look here, my gul
Come here, I'll give you an extra
glass, my dear (*He opens the side-
board, takes out the bottle of wine
and fills two of the dirty glasses*)

JULIE Where did you get the wine
from?

JOHN The cellar

JULIE My father's Bugundy!

JOHN Is it too good for his son-in-
law? I don't think!

JULIE And I've been drinking beer!

JOHN That only shows that you've
got worse taste than me

JULIE Thief!

JOHN Want to blab?

JULIE Oh, oh! the accomplice of a
house-thief I drank too much last
night and I did things in my dream
Midsummer Night, the feast of in-
nocent joys

JOHN Innocent! Hm!

JULIE (*walks up and down*) Is
there at this moment a human being
as unhappy as I am?

JOHN Why are you? After such a
fine conquest Just think of Chris-
tine in there, don't you think she's
got feelings as well?

JULIE I used to think so before, but
I don't think so any more—no, a
servant's a servant—

JOHN And a whore's a whore

JULIE O God in heaven! Take my

miserable life! Take me out of this
filth in which I'm sinking Save me
save me!

JOHN I can't gainsay but that you
make me feel sorry Once upon a
time when I lay in the onion bed
and saw you in the rose garden then
—I'll tell you straight—I had the
same dirty thoughts as all young-
sters

JULIE And then you wanted to die
for me!

JOHN In the oat bin? That was mere
gas

JULIE Lies, you mean

JOHN (*begins to get sleepy*) Near
enough I read the story once in the
paper about a chimney-sweep who
laid down in a chest full of lilac be-
cause he was ordered to take addi-
tional nourishment

JULIE Yes—so you are—

JOHN What other idea should I
have thought of? One's always got
to capture a gal with flatteries

JULIE Scoundrell

JOHN Whore!

JULIE So I must be the first branch,
must I?

JOHN But the branch was rotten

JULIE I've got to be the notice
board of the hotel, have I?

JOHN I'm going to be the hotel

JULIE Sit in your office, decoy your
customers, fake your bills

JOHN I'll see to that myself

JULIE To think that a human being can be so thoroughly dirty!

JOHN Wash yourself clean

JULIE Lackey! Menial! Stand up—you, when I'm speaking!

JOHN You wench of a menial! Hold your jaw and clear out! Is it for you to come ragging me that I'm rough? No one in my station of life could have made herself so cheap as the way you carried on tonight, my girl. Do you think that a clean-minded girl excites men in the way that you do? Have you ever seen a girl in my position offer herself in the way you did?

JULIE (*humiliated*) That's right, strike me, trample on me! I haven't deserved anything better. I'm a wretched woman. But help me! Help me to get away, if there's any chance of it.

JOHN (*more gently*) I don't want to deny my share in the honor of having seduced you, but do you think that a person in my position would have dared to have raised his eyes to you if you yourself hadn't invited him to do it? I'm still quite amazed.

JULIE And proud.

JOHN Why not? Although I must acknowledge that the victory was too easy to make me get a swelled head over it.

JULIE Strike me once more!

JOHN (*he gets up*) No, I'd rather ask you to forgive me what I've al-

ready said. I don't hit a defenseless person, and least of all a girl. I can't deny that from one point of view I enjoyed seeing that it was not gold but glitter which dazzled us all down below, to have seen that the back of the hawk was only diab, and that there was powder on those dainty cheeks, and that those manicured nails could have grimy tips, that the handkerchief was dirty, even though it did smell of scent! But it pained me, on the other hand, to have seen that the thing I'd been striving for was not something higher, something sounder, it pains me to have seen you sink so deep that you are far beneath your own cook, it pains me to see that the autumn flowers have crumpled up in the rain and turned into a mess.

JULIE You're talking as though you were already my superior.

JOHN I am, look here, I could change you into a countess, but you could never make me into a count!

JULIE But I am bred from a count, and that you can never be.

JOHN That's true, but I could produce counts myself if—

JULIE But you're a thief, and I'm not.

JOHN There are worse things than being a thief, that's not the worst, besides, if I'm serving in a household, I look upon myself in a manner of speaking as one of the family, as a child of the house, and it isn't regarded as stealing if a child picks a berry from a large bunch (*His passion wakes up afresh*) Miss Julie, you're a magnificent woman, much too good for the likes of me. You've

been the prey of a mad fit and you want to cover up your mistake, and that's why you've got it into your head you love me, but you don't. Of course, it may be that only my personal charms attract you—and in that case your love is not a bit better than mine, but I can never be satisfied with being nothing more to you than a mere beast, and I can't get your love

JULIE Are you sure of it?

JOHN You mean it might come about? I might love you? Yes, no doubt about it, you're pretty, you're refined (*He approaches her and takes her hand*) Nice, when you want to be, and when you have roused desire in a man the odds are that it will never be extinguished (*He embraces her*) You are like burning wine, with strong herbs in it, and a kiss from you— (*He tries to lead her on to the left, but she struggles free*)

JULIE Let me alone! That's not the way to win me!

JOHN In what way then? Not in that way? Not with caresses and pretty words—not with forethought for the future, escape from disgrace? In what way then?

JULIE In what way? In what way? I don't know—I have no idea. I loathe you like vermin, but I can't be without you

JOHN Run away with me

JULIE (*adjusts her dress*) Run away? Yes, of course we'll run away. But I'm so tired. Give me a glass of wine (*JOHN pours out the wine*) JULIE (*looks at her watch*) But we

must talk first, we've still a little time to spare (*She drinks up the glass and holds it out for some more*)

JOHN Don't drink to such excess—you'll get drunk!

JULIE What does it matter?

JOHN What does it matter? It's cheap to get drunk. What do you want to say to me then?

JULIE We'll run away, but we'll talk first, that means I will talk, because up to now you've done all the talking yourself. You've told me about your life, now I'll tell you about mine. Then we shall know each other thoroughly, before we start on our joint wanderings

JOHN One moment. Excuse me, just think if you won't be sorry afterward for giving away all the secrets of your life

JULIE Aren't you my friend?

JOHN Yes, for a short time. Don't trust me

JULIE You don't mean what you say. Besides, everybody knows my secrets. Look here, my mother was not of noble birth, but quite simple, she was brought up in the theories of her period about the equality and freedom of woman and all the rest of it. Then she had a distinct aversion to marriage. When my father proposed to her, she answered that she would never become his wife, but—she did. I came into the world—against the wish of my mother so far as I could understand. The next was, that I was brought up by my mother to lead what she called a

child's natural life, and to do that, I had to learn everything that a boy has to learn, so that I could be a living example of her theory that a woman is as good as a man. I could go about in boys' clothes. I learned to groom horses, but I wasn't allowed to go into the dairy. I had to scrub and harness horses and go hunting. Yes, and at times I had actually to try and learn farm work, and at home the men were given women's work and the women were given men's work—the result was that the property began to go down and we became the laughing-stock of the whole neighborhood. At last my father appears to have wakened up out of his trance and to have rebelled, then everything was altered to suit his wishes. My mother became ill. I don't know what the illness was, but she often suffered from seizures, hid herself in the grounds and in the garden, and remained in the open air the whole night. Then came the great fire, which you must have heard about. House, farm buildings and stables all were burnt, and under circumstances, mind you, which gave a suspicion of arson, because the accident happened the day after the expiration of the quarterly payment of the insurance installment, and the premiums which my father had sent were delayed through the carelessness of the messenger, so that they did not get there in time. (*She fills her glass and drinks*)

JOHN Don't drink any more

JULIE Oh, what does it matter? We were without shelter and had to sleep in the carriage. My father didn't know where he was to get the money to build a house again. Then my mother advised him to approach

a friend of her youth for a loan, a tile manufacturer in the neighborhood. Father got the loan, but didn't have to pay any interest, which made him quite surprised, and then the house was built. (*She drinks again*) You know who set fire to the house?

JOHN My lady your mother

JULIE Do you know who the tile manufacturer was?

JOHN Your mother's lover

JULIE Do you know whose the money was?

JOHN Wait a minute. No, that I don't know.

JULIE My mother's

JOHN The Count's then?—unless they were living with separate estates?

JULIE They weren't doing that. My mother had a small fortune, which she didn't allow my father to handle, and she invested it with—the friend.

JOHN Who banked it?

JULIE Quite right. This all came to my father's ears, but he could not take any legal steps, he couldn't pay his wife's lover, he couldn't prove that it was his wife's money. That was my mother's revenge for his using force against her at home. He then made up his mind to shoot himself. The report went about that he had wanted to do it, but hadn't succeeded. He remained alive then, and my mother had to settle for what she'd done. That was a bad

time for me, as you can imagine I sympathized with my father, but I sided with my mother, as I didn't understand the position I learnt from her to mistrust and hate men, for, so far as I could hear, she always hated men—and I swore to her that I would never be a man's slave

JOHN And then you became engaged to Kronvugt?

JULIE For the simple reason that he was to have been my slave

JOHN And he wouldn't have it?

JULIE He was willing enough, but nothing came of it I got sick of him

JOHN I saw it, in the stable

JULIE What did you see?

JOHN I saw how he broke off the engagement

JULIE That's a lie It was I who broke off the engagement Did he say that he did it? The scoundrel!

JOHN No, he wasn't a scoundrel at all You hate the men, Miss

JULIE Yes—usually, but at times, when my weak fit comes on—ugh!

JOHN So you hate me as well?

JULIE Infinitely I could have you killed like a beast

JOHN The criminal is condemned to hard labor, but the beast is killed

JULIE Quite right

JOHN. But there's no beast here—

and no prosecutor either What are we going to do?

JULIE Travel

JOHN To torture each other to death?

JULIE No—have a good time for two, three years, or as long as we can—and then die

JOHN Die? What nonsense! I'm all for starting a hotel

JULIE (*without listening to him*). By the Lake of Como, where the sun is always shining, where the laurel-trees are green at Christmas and the oranges glow

JOHN The Lake of Como is a rainy hole I didn't see any oranges there, except in the vegetable shops, but it's a good place for visitors, because there are a lot of villas which can be let to honeymooning couples, and that's a very profitable industry I'll tell you why They take a six months' lease—and travel away after three weeks

JULIE (*newly*) Why after three weeks?

JOHN They quarrel, of course, but the rent's got to be paid all the same, and then we let again, and so it goes on one after the other, for love goes on to all eternity—even though it doesn't keep quite so long

JULIE Then you won't die with me?

JOHN I won't die at all just yet, thank you In the first place, because I still enjoy life, and, besides, because I look upon suicide as a sin against providence, which has given us life

JULIE Do you believe in God—you?

JOHN Yes, I certainly do, and I go to church every other Sunday But, speaking frankly, I'm tired of all this, and I'm going to bed now

JULIE You are, are you? And you think that I'm satisfied with that? Do you know what a man owes to the woman he has dishonored?

JOHN (*takes out his purse and throws a silver coin on the table*) If you don't mind, I don't like being in anybody's debt

JULIE (*as though she had not noticed the insult*) Do you know what the law provides?

JOHN Unfortunately, the law does not provide any penalty for the woman who seduces a man

JULIE (*as before*) Can you find any other way out than that we should travel, marry and then get divorced again?

JOHN And if I refused to take on the *mésalliance*?

JULIE *Mésalliance*?

JOHN Yes, for me I've got better ancestors than you have I haven't got any incendiaries in my pedigree

JULIE How do you know?

JOHN At any rate, you can't prove the contrary, for we have no other pedigree than what you can see in the registry But I read in a book on the drawing-room table about your pedigree Do you know what the founder of your line was? A miller

with whose wife the king spent a night during the Danish war I don't run to ancestors like that I've got no ancestors at all, as a matter of fact, but I can be an ancestor myself

JULIE This is what I get for opening my heart to a cad, for giving away my family honor

JOHN Family shame, you mean But, look here, I told you so, people shouldn't drink, because then people talk nonsense, and people shouldn't talk nonsense

JULIE Oh, how I wish it undone, how I wish it undone! And if you only loved me!

JOHN For the last time—what do you want? Do you want me to cry, do you want me to jump over your riding whip, do you want me to kiss you, or tempt you away for three weeks by the Lake of Como, and then, what am I to do?—what do you want? The thing's beginning to be a nuisance, but that's what one gets for meddling in the private affairs of the fair sex Miss Julie, I see you're unhappy, I know that you suffer, but I can't understand you People like us don't go in for such fairy tales, we don't hate each other either We take love as a game, when our work gives us time off, but we haven't got the whole day and the whole night to devote to it Let me look at you You are ill, you are certainly ill!

JULIE You must be kind to me, and now talk like a man Help me! Help me! Tell me what I must do—what course I shall take

JOHN My Christ! If I only knew myself!

JULIE I am raving, I have been mad! But isn't there any way by which I can be saved?

JOHN Stay here and keep quiet
Nobody knows anything

JULIE Impossible! The servants know it, and Christine knows it

JOHN They don't know and they would never believe anything of the kind

JULIE (*slowly*) It might happen again

JOHN That's true

JULIE And the results?

JOHN The results? Where was I wool-gathering not to have thought about it? Yes, there's only one thing to do—to clear out at once. I won't go with you, because then it's all up, but you must travel alone—away—anywhere you like

JULIE Alone? Where? I can't do it

JOHN You must. And before the Count comes back too. If you stay, then you know what will be the result. If one has taken the first step, then one goes on with it, because one's already in for the disgrace, and then one gets bolder and bolder—at last you get copped—so you must travel. Write later on to the Count and confess everything except that it was me, and he'll never guess that I don't think either that he'd be very pleased if he did find out

JULIE I'll travel, if you'll come with me

JOHN Are you mad, Miss? Do you want to elope with your servant? It'll all be in the papers the next morning, and the Count would never get over it

JULIE I can't travel, I can't stay. Help me! I am so tired, so infinitely tired—give me orders, put life into me again or I can't think any more, and I can't do any more

JOHN See here, now, what a wretched creature you are! Why do you strut about and turn up your nose as though you were the lord of creation? Well, then, I will give you orders, you go and change your clothes, get some money to travel with and come down here again

JULIE (*sotto voce*) Come up with me

JOHN To your room? Now you're mad again (*He hesitates for a moment*) No, you go at once (*He takes her by the hand and leads her to the glass door*)

JULIE (*as she goes*) Please speak kindly to me, John

JOHN An order always has an unkind sound. Just feel it now for yourself, just feel it (*Exeunt both*)

(*JOHN comes back, gives a sigh of relief, sits down at the table by the right, and takes out his notebook, now and again he counts aloud, pantomime* CHRISTINE comes in with a white shirt-front and a white necktie in her hand)

CHRISTINE Good Lord! What does the man look like! What's happened here?

JOHN Oh, Miss Julie called in the

servants Were you so sound asleep that you didn't hear it?

CHRISTINE I slept like a log

JOHN And dressed all ready for church?

CHRISTINE Yes You know you promised, dear, to come to Communion with me today

JOHN Yes, that's true, and you've already got some of my togs for me Well, come here *(He sits down on the right CHRISTINE gives him the white front and necktie and helps him to put them on Pause Sleepily)* What gospel is it today?

CHRISTINE I've got an idea it's about the beheading of John the Baptist

JOHN That's certain to last an awful time! Ugh! You're hurting me Oh, I'm so sleepy, so sleepy!

CHRISTINE Yes, what have you been doing all night? You look absolutely washed out

JOHN I've been sitting here chatting with Miss Juhe

CHRISTINE She doesn't know what's decent My God! she doesn't *(Pause)*

JOHN I say, Christine dear

CHRISTINE Well?

JOHN It's awfully strange when one comes to think it over

CHRISTINE What's so strange about her?

JOHN Everything *(Pause)*

CHRISTINE *(looks at the glass which stands half empty on the table)* Did you drink together as well?

JOHN Yes

CHRISTINE Ugh! Look me in the face

JOHN Yes

CHRISTINE Is it possible? Is it possible?

JOHN *(after reflecting for a short time)* Yes, it is

CHRISTINE Crkey! I'd never have thought it, that I wouldn't No Ugh! Ugh!

JOHN I take it you're not jealous of her?

CHRISTINE No, not of her, if it had been Clara or Sophie, yes, I should have been Poor girl! Now, I tell you what I won't stay any longer in this house, where one can't keep any respect for the gentry

JOHN Why should one respect them?

CHRISTINE Yes, and you, who are as sly as they're made, ask me that But will you serve people who carry on so improper? Why, one lowers oneself by doing it, it seems to me

JOHN Yes, but it's certainly a consolation for us that the others are no better than we are

CHRISTINE No, I don't find that, because if they're not better it's not worth while trying to be like our betters, and think of the Count, think of him, he's had so much

trouble all his life long No, I won't stay any longer in this house And with the likes of you! If it had been even Kronvagt, if it had been a better man

JOHN What do you mean?

CHRISTINE Yes, yes, you're quite a good fellow, I know, but there's always a difference between people and people—and I can never forget it A young lady who was so proud, so haughty to the men that one could never imagine that she would ever give herself to a man—and then the likes of you! Her, who wanted to have the poor Diana shot dead at once, because she ran after a dog in the courtyard Yes, I must say that, but I won't stay here any longer, and on the 24th of October I go my way

JOHN And then?

CHRISTINE Well, as we're on the subject, it would be about time for you to look out for another job, as we want to get married

JOHN Yes, what kind of a job am I to look out for? I can't get as good a place as this, if I'm married

CHRISTINE Of course, you can't, but you must try to get a place as porter, or see if you can get a situation as a servant in some public institution The victuals are few but certain, and then the wife and children get a pension

JOHN (*with a grimace*) That's all very fine, but it's not quite my line of country to start off about thinking of dying for wife and child. I must confess that I've higher views

CHRISTINE Your views, to be sure!

But you've also got obligations Just think of her

JOHN You mustn't nag me by talking about my obligations I know quite well what I've got to do (*He listens for a sound outside*) But we've got time enough to think about all this Go in, and get ready, and then we'll go to church

CHRISTINE Who's walking about upstairs?

JOHN I don't know—perhaps Clara

CHRISTINE (*goes*) I suppose it can't be the Count who's come back without anyone having heard him?

JOHN (*nervously*) No, I don't think so, because then he'd have rung already

CHRISTINE Yes God knows I've gone through the likes of this before (*Exit to the right The sun has risen in the meanwhile and gradually illuminates the tops of the trees outside, the light grows gradually deeper till it falls slanting on the window JOHN goes to the glass door and makes a sign*)

JULIE (*comes in in traveling dress, with a small bird cage covered with a handkerchief, and places it on a chair*) I'm ready now

JOHN Hush! Christine is awake

JULIE (*extremely excited in the following scene*) Did she have any idea?

JOHN She knows nothing But, my God! what a sight you look

JULIE What! How do I look?

JOHN You're as white as a corpse and, pardon my saying it, your face is dirty

JULIE Then give me some water to wash—all right (*She goes to the washing-stand and washes her face and hands*) Give me a towel Ah! the sun has risen

JOHN And then the hobgoblin flies away

JULIE Yes, a goblin has really been at work last night Listen to me Come with me I've got the needful, John

JOHN (*hesitating*) Enough?

JULIE Enough to start on Come with me, I can't travel alone today Just think of it Midsummer Day in a stuffy train, stuck in among a lot of people who stare at one, waiting about at stations when one wants to fly No, I can't do it! I can't do it! And then all my memories, my memories of Midsummer's Day when I was a child, with the church decorated with flowers—birch and lilac, the midday meal at a splendidly covered table, relatives and friends, the afternoon in the park, dancing and music, flowers and games Ah! you can run away and run away, but your memories, your repentance and your pangs of conscience follow on in the luggage van

JOHN I'll come with you, but right away, before it's too late Now Immediately

JULIE Then get ready (*She takes up the bird cage*)

JOHN But no luggage In that case we're lost

JULIE No, no luggage, only what we can take with us in the compartment

JOHN (*has taken a hat*) What have you got there then? What is it?

JULIE It's only my little canary I don't want to leave it behind

JOHN Come, I say! Have we got to cart along a bird cage with us? How absolutely mad! Leave the bird there!

JULIE The only thing I'm taking with me from home! The only living creature that likes me, after Diana was faithless to me! Don't be cruel Let me take it with me!

JOHN Leave it there, I tell you—and don't talk so loud Christine might hear us

JULIE No, I won't leave it behind among strangers I'd rather you killed it

JOHN Then give me the little thing, I'll twist its neck for it

JULIE Yes, but don't hurt it, don't! No, I can't!

JOHN Hand it over—I'll do the trick

JULIE (*takes the bird out of the cage and kisses it*) Oh, my dicky bird! Must you die by the hand of your own mistress?

JOHN Be good enough not to make any scene, your life and well-being are at stake That's right, quick! (*He snatches the bird out of her hand, carries it to the chopping block, and takes the kitchen knife* JULIE

turns round) You should have learned to kill fowls instead of shooting with your revolver (*Chops*) And then you wouldn't have fainted at the sight of a drop of blood

JULIE (*shrieking*) Kill me too, kill me! If you can kill an innocent animal without your hand shaking! Oh, I hate and loathe you! There is blood between us! I curse the hour in which I saw you! I curse the hour in which I was born!

JOHN Now, what's the good of your cursing? Let's go!

JULIE (*approaches the chopping block as though attracted to it against her will*) No, I won't go yet, I can't—I must see Hush! there's a wagon outside (*She listens, while her eyes are riveted in a stare on the chopping block and the knife*) Do you think I can't look at any blood? Do you think I'm so weak? Oh! I'd just like to see your blood and your brains on the chopping block I'd like to see your whole stock swimming in a lake, like the one there I believe I could drink out of your skull! I could wash my feet in your chest! I could eat your heart roasted! You think I am weak! You think I love you! You think I mean to carry your spawn under my heart and feed it with my own blood, bear your child and give it your name! I say, you, what is your name? I've never heard your surname—you haven't got any, I should think I shall be Mrs Head Waiter, or Madame Chimney Sweeper You hound! You, who wear my livery, you menial, who wear my arms on your buttons—I've got to go shares with my cook, have I?—to compete with my own servant? Oh! oh! oh! You think I'm

a coward and want to run away? No, now I'm going to stay, and then the storm can burst My father comes home—he finds his secretary broken open and his money stolen—then he rings the bell twice—for his servant—and then he sends for the police—and then I shall tell him everything Everything! Oh, it's fine to make an end of the thing—if it would only have an end And then he gets a stroke, and dies—and that's the end of the whole story And then comes peace and quiet—eternal peace And then the escutcheon is broken over the coffin the noble race is extinct—and the servant's brat grows up in a foundling hospital—and wins his spurs in the gutter, and finishes up in a prison (*CHRISTINE, dressed for church, enters on the right, hymn book in hand* JULIE rushes to her and falls into her arms, as though seeking protection) Help me, Christine, help me against this man!

CHRISTINE (*immobile and cold*) What a pretty sight for a holiday morning! (*She looks at the chopping block*) And what a dirty mess you've been making here! What can it all mean? How you're shrieking and——

JULIE Christine, you're a woman, and my friend Beware of this scoundrel

JOHN (*slightly shy and embarrassed*) If you ladies want to have an argument, I'll go in and have a shave (*He sneaks away to the right*)

JULIE You will understand me, and you must do what I tell you

CHRISTINE No I certainly don't

understand such carryings-on Where are you going to in your traveling dress? And he's got his hat on What's it all mean?

JULIE Listen to me, Christine, listen to me, then I'll tell you everything

CHRISTINE I don't want to know anything

JULIE You must listen to me

CHRISTINE What is it, then? Your tomfoolery with John? Look here, I don't care anything about that, because it had nothing to do with me, but if you think you're going to tempt him to elope with you, then we'll put a very fine spoke in your little wheel

JULIE (*extremely excited*) Try to be calm, Christine, and listen to me! I can't stay here, and John can't stay here, so we must travel

CHRISTINE Hm, hm!

JULIE (*with sudden inspiration*) But, look here I've got an idea now How about if we all three went—abroad—to Switzerland and started a hotel together? I've got money (*She shows it*) You see, and John and I will look after the whole thing, and you, I thought, could take over the kitchen Isn't it nice? Just say yes, and come with us, and all is fixed up Just say yes (*She embraces CHRISTINE and hugs her tenderly*)

CHRISTINE (*cold and contemplative*) Hm, hm!

JULIE (*quicker*) You've never been out and traveled, Christine—you

must come out in the world and look round, you can have no idea how jolly it is to travel on a railway—to be always seeing new people—new countries And then we get to Hamburg and take a trip through the Zoological Gardens What do you think of it? And then we'll go to the theater and hear the opera—and when we get to Munich we've got the museums, and there are Rubenses and Raphaels—pictures by the two great painters, you see You've heard people talk of Munich, where King Ludwig used to live—the king, you know, who went mad—and then we'll go over his castles—he has castles which are got up just like fairy tales—and it's not far from there to Switzerland—with the Alps Ugh! just think of the Alps covered with snow in the middle of summer, and tangerines and laurel trees grow there which are in bloom the whole year round (*JOHN appears on the right, sharpening his razor on a strop, which he holds with his teeth and his left hand He listens with pleasure to her speech, and now and again nods assent Extremely quickly*) And then we take a hotel—and I sit in the bureau while John stands up and receives the visitors—goes out and does business—writes letters That's a life, you take it from me, then the train puffs, the omnibus comes, the bells ring in the hotel itself, the bell rings in the restaurant—and then I make out the bills—and I'll touch them up—you can have no idea how shy travelers are when they've got to pay their bill And you—you're installed as mistress in the kitchen Of course, you haven't yourself got to stand by the fireplace, and you've got to have nice pretty dresses when you have to appear before the visitors—and a girl with an appearance

like you—no, I'm not flattering you—you can get a husband perhaps some fine day, some rich Englishman, you see, people are so easy to catch (*She commences to speak more slowly*) And then we shall get rich—and we'll build a villa by Lake Como—of course it rains there now and then, but (*in a less tense tone*) there's certain to be a great deal of sun—even though there's gloomy weather as well—and—then—then we can travel home again—and come back (*pause*) here—or anywhere else

CHRISTINE Look here, Miss, do you believe in all this yourself?

JULIE (*crushed*) Do I believe in it myself?

CHRISTINE Yes

JULIE (*tired*) I don't know I don't really believe in anything any more (*She sits down on the seat and lays her head on the table between her arms*) In anything, in anything at all

CHRISTINE (*turns to the left, where JOHN is standing*) So you thought you'd elope, did you?

JOHN (*shamefaced, puts his razor on the table*) Elope? Come, that's a big word—you heard Miss Julie's plan, and although she's tired now, from having been up all night, the scheme can still be put through

CHRISTINE I say, did you mean that I should be cook there, for her?

JOHN (*sharply*) Be so kind as to speak more refined when you're talking of your mistress Understand?

CHRISTINE Mistress?

JOHN Yes

CHRISTINE No I say, I say there—

JOHN Yes, listen to me It is much better for you if you do, and don't gabble so much Miss Julie is your mistress, and you ought to despise yourself for the same reason that you despise her

CHRISTINE I have always had so much self-respect—

JOHN That you can despise others

CHRISTINE That I have never lowered myself below my place Just say, if you can, that the Count's cook had anything to do with the cattleman or the swineherd You just try it on!

JOHN Quite so You had a little something on with a nice fellow, and very lucky for you, too

CHRISTINE A nice fellow, to be sure, who sells the Count's oats out of the stable

JOHN You're a nice one to talk, you get commissions from the vegetable man and an't above being squared by the butcher

CHRISTINE What?

JOHN And so it's you that can't respect your mistress any more! You—you—I don't think!

CHRISTINE Come along to church now A good sermon'll do you a lot of good after the way you've been carrying on

JOHN No fear, I'm not going to church today You go alone, and confess your own sins

CHRISTINE Yes, that I will, and I'll come home with forgiveness, and for you too, the Redeemer suffered and died on the cross for all our sins, and if we go to Him with faith and a contrite spirit then He will take all our guilt on Himself

JULIE Do you believe that, Christine?

CHRISTINE That's my living faith, as true as I stand here, and that's my faith from a child, that I've kept ever since I was young, and where sin overflows there grace overflows as well

JULIE Ah, if I had your faith! Ah, if—

CHRISTINE Mark you, one can't just go and get it

JULIE Who gets it, then?

CHRISTINE That's the great secret of grace, Miss, mark you, and God is no respecter of persons, but the first shall be last

JULIE Yes, but then He is a respecter of persons—the last

CHRISTINE (*continues*) And it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven Mark you that's what it is, Miss Julie Well, I'm off—alone, and on the way I'll tell the stable boy not to let out any horses, in case anybody wants to travel, before the Count comes home Adieu! (*Exit through the glass door*)

JOHN What a devil! And all that fuss about a canary

JULIE (*limply*) Leave the canary out of it Can you see a way out of all this?—an end for the whole thing?

JOHN (*ponders*) No

JULIE What would you do in my position?

JOHN In your position? Just wait a minute, will you? As a girl of good birth, as a woman—as a fallen woman? I don't know Ah! I've got it!

JULIE (*takes up the razor and makes a movement*) That?

JOHN Yes, but I wouldn't do it—note that well, that's the difference between us

JULIE Because you're a man and I'm a woman? What difference does that make?

JOHN The same difference—as between men and women

JULIE (*with the razor in her hand*) I want to, but I can't do it My father couldn't do it either—the time when he ought to have

JOHN No, he shouldn't have done it—his first duty was to revenge himself

JULIE And now my mother avenges herself again through me

JOHN Have you never loved your father, Miss Julie?

JULIE Yes, infinitely—but I'm sure

that I've hated him as well I must have done it without having noticed it myself, but he brought me up to despise my own sex, to be half a woman and half a man. Who is to blame for what has happened? My father, my mother, I myself? I myself? I haven't got a self at all, I haven't got a thought which I don't get from my father, I haven't got a passion which I don't get from my mother, and the latest phase—the equality of men and women—that I got from my *fiancé*, whom I called a scoundrel for his pains. How then can it be my own fault? To shove the blame on Jesus as Christine does—no, I've got too much pride and too much common sense for that—thanks to my father's teaching. And as for a rich man not being able to get into the kingdom of heaven, that's a lie. Christine has got money in the savings bank. Certainly she won't get in. Who is responsible for the wrong? What does it matter to us who is? I know I've got to put up with the blame and the consequences.

JOHN Yes—but— (*There are two loud rings in succession. JULIE starts, JOHN quickly changes his coat, on the left*) The Count's at home—just think if Christine— (*He goes to the speaking tube at the back, whistles, and listens*)

JULIE He must have already gone to his secretary by now.

JOHN It's John, my lord (*He listens. What the Count says is inaudible*) Yes, my lord (*He listens*) Yes, my lord. At once (*He listens*) Very well, my lord (*He listens*) Yes, in half-an-hour.

JULIE (*extremely nervous*) What

did he say? My God! what did he say?

JOHN He asked for his boots and his coffee in half-an-hour.

JULIE In half-an-hour then. Oh, I'm so tired, I can't do anything, I can't repent, I can't run away, I can't stay, I can't live, I can't die. Help me now! Give me orders and I'll obey like a dog. Do me this last service! Save my honor—save my name! You know what I ought to will, but don't will. Do you will it and order me to accomplish it.

JOHN I don't know—but now I can't either. I can't make it out myself—it's just as though it were the result of this coat I've just put on, but I can't give you any orders. And now, after the Count has spoken to me, I can't explain it properly—but—ah! it's the livery which I've got on my back. I believe if the Count were to come in now and order me to cut my throat I'd do it on the spot.

JULIE Then just do as though you were he, and I were you. You could imagine it quite well a minute ago, when you were before me on your knees. Then you were a knight. Have you ever been to the theater and seen the mesmerist? (*JOHN makes a gesture of assent*) He says to the medium, "Take the broom", he takes it, he says "Sweep," and he sweeps.

JOHN But in that case the medium must be asleep.

JULIE (*exalted*) I am already asleep. The whole room looks as though it were full of smoke—and you look like an iron furnace—

which is like a man in black clothes and top hat—and your eyes glow like coals when the fire goes out—and your face is a white blur like cinders (*The sunlight has now reached the floor and streams over* JOHN) It's so warm and fine (*She rubs her hands as though she were warming them by a fire*) And then it's so light—and so quiet

JOHN (*takes the razor and puts it in her hand*) There is the broom, go, now that it's light, outside into the barn—and—— (*He whispers something in her ear*)

JULIE (*awake*) Thank you Now I'm going to have peace, but tell me now that the first shall have their share of grace too Tell me that, even though you don't believe it

JOHN The first? No, I can't do that, but, one minute, Miss Julie—I've got it, you don't belong any longer to the first—you are beneath the last

JULIE That's true—I am beneath

the very last, I am the last myself Oh—but now I can't go Tell me again that I must go

JOHN No, I can't do that again now either I can't

JULIE And the first shall be last

JOHN Don't think, don't think! You rob me of all my strength and make a coward of me What? I believe the clock was moving No—shall we put paper in? To be so funky of the sound of a clock! But it's something more than a clock—there's something that sits behind it—a hand puts it in motion, and something else sets the hand in motion—just put your fingers to your ears, and then it strikes worse again It strikes until you give an answer and then it's too late, and then come the police—and then—— (*Two loud rings in succession JOHN starts, then he pulls himself together*) It's awful, but there's no other way out Go! (*JULIE goes with a firm step outside the door*)

CURTAIN

Salomé

BY OSCAR WILDE

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CHARACTERS

SALOMÉ

JOKANAAN

HEROD

HERODIAS

TIGELLINUS

THE CAPPADOCIAN

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

THE NUBIAN

PAGE OF HERODIAS

A SADDUCEE

A PHARISEE

SOLDIERS, SLAVES, NAZARENES, JEWS

SALOMÉ

SCENE — *A great terrace in the Palace of HEROD, set above the banquet-hall. Some soldiers are leaning over the balcony. To the right there is a gigantic staircase, to the left, at the back, an old cistern surrounded by a wall of green bronze. The moon is shining very brightly.*

THE YOUNG SYRIAN How beautiful
is the Princess Salomé tonight!

THE YOUNG SYRIAN How beautiful
is the Princess Salomé tonight!

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS Look at the
moon. How strange the moon seems!
She is like a woman rising from a
tomb. She is like a dead woman.
One might fancy she was looking
for dead things.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS You are al-
ways looking at her. You look at her
too much. It is dangerous to look at
people in such fashion. Something
terrible may happen.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN She has a strange
look. She is like a little princess who
wears a yellow veil, and whose feet
are of silver. She is like a princess
who has little white doves for feet.
One might fancy she was dancing.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN She is very
beautiful tonight.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS She is like a
woman who is dead. She moves
very slowly. (*Noise in the banquet-
ing-hall.*)

FIRST SOLDIER The Tetrarch has a
somber aspect.

SECOND SOLDIER Yes, he has a som-
ber aspect.

FIRST SOLDIER What an uproar!
Who are those wild beasts howling?

FIRST SOLDIER He is looking at
something.

SECOND SOLDIER The Jews. They
are always like that. They are dis-
puting about their religion.

SECOND SOLDIER He is looking at
someone.

FIRST SOLDIER Why do they dis-
pute about their religion?

FIRST SOLDIER At whom is he look-
ing?

SECOND SOLDIER I cannot tell. They
are always doing it. The Pharisees,
for instance, say that there are an-
gels, and the Sadducees declare that
angels do not exist.

SECOND SOLDIER I cannot tell.

FIRST SOLDIER I think it is ridicu-
lous to dispute about such things.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN How pale the
Princess is! Never have I seen her so
pale. She is like the shadow of a
white rose in a mirror of silver.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS You must
not look at her. You look too much
at her.

FIRST SOLDIER Herodias has filled
the cup of the Tetrarch.

THE CAPPADOCIAN Is that the Queen Herodias, she who wears a black mitre sewed with pearls, and whose hair is powdered with blue dust?

FIRST SOLDIER Yes, that is Herodias, the Tetrarch's wife

SECOND SOLDIER The Tetrarch is very fond of wine. He has wine of three sorts. One which is brought from the Island of Samothrace, and is purple like the cloak of Cæsar.

THE CAPPADOCIAN I have never seen Cæsar.

SECOND SOLDIER Another that comes from a town called Cyprus, and is as yellow as gold.

THE CAPPADOCIAN I love gold.

SECOND SOLDIER And the third is a wine of Sicily. That wine is red as blood.

THE NUBIAN The gods of my country are very fond. Twice in the year we sacrifice to them young men and maidens, fifty young men and a hundred maidens. But I am afraid that we never give them quite enough, for they are very harsh to us.

THE CAPPADOCIAN In my country there are no gods left. The Romans have driven them out. There are some who say that they have hidden themselves in the mountains, but I do not believe it. Three nights I have been on the mountains seeking them everywhere. I did not find them. And at last I called them by their names, and they did not come. I think they are dead.

FIRST SOLDIER The Jews worship a God that one cannot see.

THE CAPPADOCIAN I cannot understand that.

FIRST SOLDIER In fact, they only believe in things that one cannot see.

THE CAPPADOCIAN That seems to me altogether ridiculous.

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN After me shall come another mightier than I. I am not worthy so much as to unloose the latchet of his shoes. When he cometh, the solitary places shall be glad. They shall blossom like the rose. The eyes of the blind shall see the day, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened. The suckling child shall put his hand upon the dragon's lair, he shall lead the lions by their manes.

SECOND SOLDIER Make him be silent. He is always saying ridiculous things.

FIRST SOLDIER No, no. He is a holy man. He is very gentle, too. Every day, when I give him to eat, he thanks me.

THE CAPPADOCIAN Who is he?

FIRST SOLDIER A prophet.

THE CAPPADOCIAN What is his name?

FIRST SOLDIER Jokanaan.

THE CAPPADOCIAN Whence comes he?

FIRST SOLDIER From the desert where he fed on locusts and wild honey. He was clothed in camel's hair, and round his loins he had a leathern belt. He was very terrible to look upon. A great multitude

used to follow him He even had disciples

THE CAPPADOCIAN What is he talking of?

FIRST SOLDIER We can never tell Sometimes he says things that frighten one, but it is impossible to understand what he says

THE CAPPADOCIAN May one see him?

FIRST SOLDIER No The Tetrarch has forbidden it

THE YOUNG SYRIAN The Princess has hidden her face behind her fan! Her little white hands are fluttering like doves that fly to their dovecotes They are like white butterflies They are just like white butterflies.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS What is that to you? Why do you look at her? You must not look at her Something terrible may happen

THE CAPPADOCIAN (*pointing to the cistern*) What a strange prison!

SECOND SOLDIER It is an old cistern

THE CAPPADOCIAN An old cistern! That must be a poisonous place in which to dwell!

SECOND SOLDIER Oh, no! For instance, the Tetrarch's brother, his elder brother, the first husband of Herodias the Queen, was imprisoned there for twelve years It did not kill him At the end of the twelve years he had to be strangled

THE CAPPADOCIAN Strangled? Who dared to do that?

SECOND SOLDIER (*pointing to the Executioner, a huge Negro*) That man yonder, Naaman

THE CAPPADOCIAN He was not afraid?

SECOND SOLDIER Oh, no! The Tetrarch sent him the ring

THE CAPPADOCIAN What ring?

SECOND SOLDIER The death-ring So he was not afraid

THE CAPPADOCIAN Yet it is a terrible thing to strangle a king

FIRST SOLDIER Why? Kings have but one neck, like other folk

THE CAPPADOCIAN I think it terrible

THE YOUNG SYRIAN The Princess is getting up! She is leaving the table! She looks very troubled Ah, she is coming this way Yes, she is coming toward us How pale she is! Never have I seen her so pale

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS I pray you not to look at her

THE YOUNG SYRIAN She is like a dove that has strayed She is like a narcissus trembling in the wind She is like a silver flower

(*Enter SALOMÉ*)

SALOMÉ I will not stay I cannot stay Why does the Tetrarch look at me all the while with his mole's eye under his shaking eyelids? It is strange that the husband of my mother looks at me like that I know not what it means Of a truth I know it too well

THE YOUNG SYRIAN You have left the feast, Princess?

SECOND SOLDIER The prophet, Princess

SALOMÉ How sweet is the air here! I can breathe here! Within there are Jews from Jerusalem who are tearing each other in pieces over their foolish ceremonies, and barbarians who drink and drink, and spill their wine on the pavement, and Greeks from Smyrna with panted eyes and painted cheeks, and frizzed hair curled in columns, and Egyptians silent and subtle, with long nails of jade and russet cloaks, and Romans brutal and coarse, with their uncouth jargon. Ah! how I loathe the Romans! They are rough and common, and they give themselves the airs of noble lords

SALOMÉ Ah, the prophet! He of whom the Tetrarch is afraid?

SECOND SOLDIER We know nothing of that, Princess. It was the prophet Jokanaan who cried out

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Is it your pleasure that I bid them bring your litter, Princess? The night is fair in the garden

SALOMÉ He says terrible things about my mother, does he not?

SECOND SOLDIER We never understand what he says, Princess

SALOMÉ Yes, he says terrible things about her
(Enter a SLAVE)

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Will you be seated, Princess?

THE SLAVE Princess, the Tetrarch prays you to return to the feast

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS Why do you speak to her? Oh! something terrible will happen. Why do you look at her?

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Pardon me, Princess, but if you return not some misfortune may happen

SALOMÉ How good to see the moon! She is like a little piece of money, a little silver flower. She is cold and chaste. I am sure she is a virgin. Yes, she is a virgin. She has never defiled herself. She has never abandoned herself to men, like the other goddesses

SALOMÉ Is he an old man, this prophet?

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN Behold! the Lord hath come. The son of man is at hand. The centaurs have hidden themselves in the rivers, and the nymphs have left the rivers, and are lying beneath the leaves of the forest

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Princess, it were better to return. Suffer me to lead you in

SALOMÉ This prophet is he an old man?

FIRST SOLDIER No, Princess, he is quite young

SECOND SOLDIER. One cannot be sure. There are those who say he is Elias

SALOMÉ Who was that who cried out?

SALOMÉ Who is Elias?

SECOND SOLDIER A prophet of this country in bygone days, Princess

SALOMÉ You are making me wait upon your pleasure

THE SLAVE What answer may I give the Tetrarch from the Princess?

FIRST SOLDIER Princess, our lives belong to you, but we cannot do what you have asked of us And indeed, it is not of us that you should ask this thing

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN Rejoice not, O land of Palestine, because the rod of him who smote thee is broken For from the seed of the serpent shall come a basilisk, and that which is born of it shall devour the birds

SALOMÉ (*looking at THE YOUNG SYRIAN*) Ah!

SALOMÉ What a strange voice! I would speak with him

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS Oh! what is going to happen? I am sure that something terrible will happen

FIRST SOLDIER I fear it may not be, Princess The Tetrarch does not suffer anyone to speak with him He has even forbidden the high priest to speak with him

SALOMÉ (*going up to THE YOUNG SYRIAN*) Thou wilt do this thing for me, wilt thou not, Narraboth? Thou wilt do this thing for me I have ever been kind towards thee Thou wilt do it for me I would but look at him, this strange prophet Men have talked so much of him Often I have heard the Tetrarch talk of him I think he is afraid of him, the Tetrarch Art thou, even thou, also afraid of him, Narraboth?

SALOMÉ I desire to speak with him

FIRST SOLDIER It is impossible, Princess

SALOMÉ I will speak with him

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Would it not be better to return to the banquet?

THE YOUNG SYRIAN I fear him not, Princess, there is no man I fear But the Tetrarch has formally forbidden that any man should raise the cover of this well

SALOMÉ Bring forth this prophet (*Exit the SLAVE*)

FIRST SOLDIER We dare not, Princess

SALOMÉ Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth, and tomorrow when I pass in my litter beneath the gateway of the idol-sellers I will let fall for thee a little flower, a little green flower

SALOMÉ (*approaching the cistern and looking down into it*) How black it is, down there! It must be terrible to be in so black a hole! It is like a tomb (*To the SOLDIERS*) Did you not hear me? Bring out the prophet I would look on him

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Princess, I cannot, I cannot

SECOND SOLDIER Princess, I beg you do not require this of us

SALOMÉ (*smiling*) Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth Thou knowest that thou wilt do this thing for me And on the morrow when ?

pass in my litter by the bridge of the idol-buyers, I will look at thee through the muslin veils, I will look at thee, Narraboth, it may be I will smile at thee Look at me, Narraboth, look at me Ah! thou knowest that thou wilt do what I ask of thee Thou knowest it I know that thou wilt do this thing

THE YOUNG SYRIAN (*signing to the THIRD SOLDIER*) Let the prophet come forth The Princess Salomé desires to see him

SALOMÉ Ah!

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS Oh! How strange the moon looks Like the hand of a dead woman who is seeking to cover herself with a shroud

THE YOUNG SYRIAN She has a strange aspect! She is like a little princess, whose eyes are eyes of amber Through the clouds of muslin she is smiling like a little princess (*The prophet comes out of the cistern SALOMÉ looks at him and steps slowly back*)

JOKANAAN Where is he whose cup of abominations is now full? Where is he, who in a robe of silver shall one day die in the face of all the people? Bid him come forth, that he may hear the voice of him who hath cried in the waste places and in the houses of kings

SALOMÉ Of whom is he speaking?

THE YOUNG SYRIAN No one can tell, Princess.

JOKANAAN Where is she who saw the images of men painted on the walls, even the images of the Chaldeans painted with colors, and gave

herself up unto the lust of her eyes, and sent ambassadors into the land of Chaldea?

SALOMÉ It is of my mother that he is speaking?

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Oh, no, Princess

SALOMÉ Yes, it is of my mother that he is speaking

JOKANAAN Where is she who gave herself unto the Captains of Assyria, who have baldricks on their loins, and crowns of many colors on their heads? Where is she who hath given herself to the young men of the Egyptians, who are clothed in fine linen and hyacinth, whose shields are of gold, whose helmets are of silver, whose bodies are mighty? Go, bid her rise up from the bed of her abominations, from the bed of her incestuousness, that she may hear the words of him who prepareth the way of the Lord, that she may repent her of her iniquities Though she will not repent, but will stick fast in her abominations, go, bid her come, for the fan of the Lord is in His hand

SALOMÉ Ah, but he is terrible, he is terrible!

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Do not stay here, Princess, I beseech you

SALOMÉ It is his eyes above all that are terrible They are like black holes burned by torches in a tapestry of Tyre They are like the black caverns of Egypt in which the dragons make their lairs They are like black lakes troubled by fantastic moons
Do you think he will speak again?

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Do not stay here, Princess I pray you do not stay here

SALOMÉ How wasted he is! He is like a thin ivory statue He is like an image of silver I am sure he is chaste as the moon is He is like a moonbeam, like a shaft of silver I would look closer at him I must look at him closer

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Princess! Princess!

JOKANAAN. Who is this woman who is looking at me? I will not have her look at me Wherefore doth she look at me with her golden eyes, under her gilded eyelids? I know not who she is I do not desire to know who she is Bid her begone It is not to her that I would speak

SALOMÉ I am Salomé, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judæa

JOKANAAN Back! daughter of Babylon! Come not near the chosen of the Lord Thy mother hath filled the earth with the wine of her iniquities, and the cry of her sinning hath come up even to the ears of God

SALOMÉ Speak again, Jokanaan Thy voice is as music to mine ear

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Princess! Princess! Princess!

SALOMÉ Speak again! Speak again, Jokanaan, and tell me what I must do

JOKANAAN Daughter of Sodom, come not near me! But cover thy face with a veil, and scatter ashes upon thine head, and get thee to the desert and seek out the Son of Man

SALOMÉ Who is he, the Son of Man? Is he as beautiful as thou art, Jokanaan?

JOKANAAN Get thee behind me! I hear in the palace the beating of the wings of the angel of death

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Princess, I beseech thee to go within

JOKANAAN Angel of the Lord God, what dost thou here with thy sword? Whom seekest thou in this palace? The day of him who shall die in a robe of silver has not yet come

SALOMÉ Jokanaan!

JOKANAAN Who speaketh?

SALOMÉ I am amorous of thy body, Jokanaan! Thy body is white like the lilies of a field that the mower hath never mowed Thy body is white like the snows that lie on the mountains of Judæa, and come down into the valleys The roses in the garden of the Queen of Arabia are not so white as thy body Neither the roses of the garden of the Queen of Arabia, the garden of spices of the Queen of Arabia, nor the feet of the dawn when they light on the leaves, nor the breast of the moon when she lies on the breast of the sea There is nothing in the world so white as thy body Suffer me to touch thy body

JOKANAAN Back! daughter of Babylon! By woman came evil into the world Speak not to me I will not listen to thee I listen but to the voice of the Lord God

SALOMÉ Thy body is hideous It is like the body of a leper It is like a plastered wall where vipers have

crawled, like a plastered wall where the scorpions have made their nest It is like a whitened sepulchre full of loathsome things It is horrible, thy body is horrible It is thy hair that I am enamoured of, Jokanaan Thy hair is like clusters of grapes, like the clusters of black grapes that hang from the vine-trees of Edom in the land of the Edomites Thy hair is like the cedars of Lebanon, like the great cedars of Lebanon that give their shade to the lions and to the robbers who would hide them by day The long black nights, when the moon hides her face, when the stars are afraid, are not so black as thy hair The silence that dwells in the forest is not so black There is nothing in the world that is so black as thy hair Suffer me to touch thy hair

JOKANAAN Back, daughter of Sodom! Touch me not Profane not the temple of the Lord God

SALOMÉ Thy hair is horrible It is covered with mire and dust It is like a knot of serpents coiled round thy neck I love not thy hair It is thy mouth that I desire, Jokanaan Thy mouth is like a band of scarlet on a tower of ivory It is like a pomegranate cut in twain with a knife of ivory The pomegranate-flowers that blossom in the gardens of Tyre, and are redder than roses, are not so red The red blasts of trumpets that herald the approach of kings, and make afraid the enemy, are not so red Thy mouth is redder than the feet of the doves who inhabit the temples and are fed by the priests It is redder than the feet of him who cometh from a forest where he hath slain a lion, and seen gilded tigers Thy mouth is like a branch of coral that fishers have found in the twi-

light of the sea, the coral that they keep for the kings! It is like the vermilion that the Moabites find in the mines of Moab, the vermilion that the kings take from them It is like the bow of the King of the Persians, that is painted with vermilion, and is tipped with coral There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth Suffer me to kiss thy mouth

JOKANAAN Never! daughter of Babylon! Daughter of Sodom! Never

SALOMÉ I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan I will kiss thy mouth

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Princess, Princess, thou art like a garden of myrrh, thou who art the dove of all doves, look not at this man, look not at him! Do not speak such words to him I cannot endure it Princess, do not speak these things

SALOMÉ I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan

THE YOUNG SYRIAN Ah! (*He kills himself and falls between SALOMÉ and JOKANAAN*)

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS The young Syrian has slain himself! The young captain has slain himself! He has slain himself who was my friend! I gave him a little box of perfumes and ear-rings wrought in silver, and now he has killed himself! Ah, did he not say that some misfortune would happen? I, too, said it, and it has come to pass Well I knew that the moon was seeking a dead thing, but I knew not that it was he whom she sought Ah! why did I not hide him from the moon? If I had hidden him in a cavern she would not have seen him

FIRST SOLDIER Princess, the young captain has just slain himself

SALOMÉ Suffer me to kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan

JOKANAAN Art thou not afraid, daughter of Herodias? Did I not tell thee that I had heard in the palace the beating of the wings of the angel of death, and hath he not come, the angel of death?

SALOMÉ Suffer me to kiss thy mouth

JOKANAAN Daughter of adultery, there is but one who can save thee, it is He of whom I spake Go seek Him He is in a boat on the sea of Galilee, and He talketh with His disciples Kneel down on the shore of the sea, and call unto Him by His name When He cometh to thee (and to all who call on Him He cometh), bow thyself at His feet and ask of Him the remissions of thy sins

SALOMÉ Suffer me to kiss thy mouth

JOKANAAN Cursed be thou! daughter of an incestuous mother, be thou accursed!

SALOMÉ I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan

JOKANAAN I will not look at thee, thou art accursed, Salomé, thou art accursed (*He goes down into the cistern*)

SALOMÉ I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan, I will kiss thy mouth

FIRST SOLDIER We must bear away

the body to another place The Tetrarch does not care to see dead bodies, save the bodies of those whom he himself has slain

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS He was my brother, and nearer to me than a brother I gave him a little box full of perfumes, and a ring of agate that he wore always on his hand In the evening we were wont to walk by the river, and among the almond trees, and he used to tell me of the things of his country He spake ever very low The sound of his voice was like the sound of the flute, of one who playeth upon the flute Also he had much joy to gaze at himself in the river I used to reproach him for that.

SECOND SOLDIER You are right, we must hide the body The Tetrarch must not see it

FIRST SOLDIER The Tetrarch will not come to this place He never comes on the terrace He is too much afraid of the prophet (*Enter HEROD, HERODIAS, and all the Court*)

HEROD Where is Salomé? Where is the Princess? Why did she not return to the banquet as I commanded her? Ah! there she is!

HERODIAS You must not look at her! You are always looking at her!

HEROD The moon has a strange look tonight Has she not a strange look? She is like a mad woman who is seeking everywhere for lovers She is naked, too She is quite naked The clouds are seeking to clothe her nakedness, but she will not let them She shows herself naked in the sky She reels through the clouds

like a drunken woman . I am sure she is looking for lovers Does she not reel like a drunken woman? She is like a mad woman, is she not?

HERODIAS No, the moon is like the moon, that is all Let us go within We have nothing to do here

HEROD I will stay here! Manasseh, lay carpets there Light torches, bring forth the ivory table, and the tables of jasper The air here is sweet I will drink more wine with my guests We must show all honors to the ambassadors of Cæsar

HERODIAS It is not because of them that you remain

HEROD Yes, the air is very sweet Come, Herodias, our guests await us Ah! I have slipped! I have slipped in blood! It is an ill omen Wherefore is there blood here? and this body, what does this body here? Think you I am like the King of Egypt, who gives no feast to his guests but that he shows them a corpse? Whose is it? I will not look on it

FIRST SOLDIER. It is our captain, sire He is the young Syrian whom you made captain of the guard but three days gone

HEROD I issued no order that he should be slain

SECOND SOLDIER He slew himself, sire

HEROD For what reason? I had made him captain of my guard

SECOND SOLDIER We do not know, sire But with his own hand he slew himself

HEROD That seems strange to me I had thought it was but the Roman philosophers who slew themselves Is it not true, Tigellinus, that the philosophers at Rome slay themselves?

TIGELLINUS There may be some who slay themselves, sire They are the Stoics The Stoics are people of no cultivation They are ridiculous people I myself regard them as being perfectly ridiculous

HEROD I also It is ridiculous to kill oneself

TIGELLINUS Everybody at Rome laughs at them The Emperor has written a satire against them It is recited everywhere

HEROD Ah! he has written a satire against them? Cæsar is wonderful He can do everything It is strange that the young Syrian has slain himself I am sorry he has slain himself I am very sorry, for he was fair to look upon He was even very fair He had very languorous eyes I remember that I saw that he looked languorously at Salomé Truly, I thought he looked too much at her

HERODIAS There are others who look too much at her

HEROD His father was a king I drove him from his kingdom And of his mother, who was a queen, you made a slave—Herodias So he was here as my guest, as it were, and for that reason I made him my captain I am sorry he is dead Ho! why have you left the body here? I will not look at it—away with it! (*They take away the body*) It is cold here There is a wind blowing Is there not a wind blowing?

HERODIAS No, there is no wind

HEROD I tell you there is a wind that blows
And I hear in the air something that is like the beating of wings, like the beating of vast wings Do you not hear it?

HERODIAS I hear nothing

HEROD I hear it no longer But I heard it It was the blowing of the wind It has passed away But no, I hear it again Do you not hear it? It is just like the beating of wings

HERODIAS I tell you there is nothing You are ill Let us go within

HEROD I am not ill It is your daughter who is sick to death Never have I seen her so pale

HERODIAS I have told you not to look at her

HEROD Pour me forth wine (*Wine is brought*) Salomé, come drink a little wine with me I have here a wine that is exquisite Cæsar himself sent it me Dip into it thy little red lips, that I may drain the cup

SALOMÉ I am not thirsty, Tetrarch

HEROD You hear how she answers me, this daughter of yours?

HERODIAS She does right Why are you always gazing at her?

HEROD Bring me ripe fruits (*Fruits are brought*) Salomé, come and eat fruits with me I love to see in a fruit the mark of thy little teeth Bite but a little of this fruit that I may eat what is left

SALOMÉ I am not hungry, Tetrarch

HEROD (*to HERODIAS*) You see how you have brought up this daughter of yours

HERODIAS My daughter and I come of a royal race As for thee, thy father was a camel driver! He was a thief and a robber to boot!

HEROD Thou heest!

HERODIAS Thou knowest well that it is true

HEROD Salomé, come and sit next to me I will give thee the throne of thy mother

SALOMÉ I am not tired, Tetrarch

HERODIAS You see in what regard she holds you

HEROD Bring me—what is it that I desire? I forget Ah! ah! I remember

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN Behold the time is come! That which I foretold has come to pass The day that I spoke of is at hand

HERODIAS Bid him be silent I will not listen to his voice This man is for ever hurling insults against me

HEROD He has said nothing against you Besides, he is a very great prophet

HERODIAS I do not believe in prophets Can a man tell what will come to pass? No man knows it Also he is for ever insulting me But I think you are afraid of him I know well that you are afraid of him

HEROD I am not afraid of him I am afraid of no man.

HERODIAS I tell you, you are afraid of him. If you are not afraid of him why do you not deliver him to the Jews who for these six months past have been clamoring for him?

A JEW Truly, my lord, it were better to deliver him into our hands

HEROD Enough on this subject. I have already given you my answer. I will not deliver him into your hands. He is a holy man. He is a man who has seen God.

A JEW That cannot be. There is no man who hath seen God since the prophet Elias. He is the last man who saw God face to face. In these days God doth not show Himself. God hideth Himself. Therefore great evils have come upon the land.

ANOTHER JEW Verily, no man knoweth if Elias the prophet did indeed see God. Peradventure it was but the shadow of God that he saw.

A THIRD JEW God is at no time hidden. He showeth Himself at all times and in all places. God is in what is evil even as He is in what is good.

A FOURTH JEW Thou shouldst not say that. It is a very dangerous doctrine. It is a doctrine that cometh from Alexandria, where men teach the philosophy of the Greeks. And the Greeks are Gentiles. They are not even circumcised.

A FIFTH JEW No one can tell how God worketh. His ways are very dark. It may be that the things which we call evil are good, and that the things which we call good are evil. There is no knowledge of any thing. We can but bow our

heads to His will, for God is very strong. He breaketh in pieces the strong together with the weak, for He regardeth not any man.

FIRST JEW Thou speakest truly. Verily God is terrible. He breaketh in pieces the strong and the weak as a man breaks corn in a mortar. But as for man, he hath never seen God. No man hath seen God since the prophet Elias.

HERODIAS Make them be silent. They weary me.

HEROD But I have heard it said that Jokanaan is in very truth your prophet Elias.

THE JEW That cannot be. It is more than three hundred years since the days of the prophet Elias.

HEROD There be some who say that this man is Elias the prophet.

A NAZARENE I am sure that he is Elias the prophet.

THE JEW Nay, but he is not Elias the prophet.

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN Behold the day is at hand, the day of the Lord, and I heard upon the mountains the feet of Him who shall be the Saviour of the world.

HEROD What does that mean? The Saviour of the world?

TIGELLINUS It is a title that Cæsar adopts.

HEROD But Cæsar is not coming into Judæa. Only yesterday I received letters from Rome. They contained nothing concerning this mat-

ter And you, Tigellinus who were at Rome during the winter, you heard nothing concerning this matter, did you?

TIGELLINUS Sire, I heard nothing concerning the matter I was explaining the title It is one of Cæsar's titles

HEROD But Cæsar cannot come He is too gouty They say that his feet are like the feet of an elephant Also there are reasons of State He who leaves Rome loses Rome He will not come Howbeit, Cæsar is lord, he will come if such be his pleasure Nevertheless, I think he will not come

FIRST NAZARENE It was not concerning Cæsar that the prophet spake these words, sire

HEROD How?—it was not concerning Cæsar?

FIRST NAZARENE No, my lord

HEROD Concerning whom then did he speak?

FIRST NAZARENE Concerning the Messiah who has come

A JEW The Messiah hath not come

FIRST NAZARENE He hath come, and everywhere He worketh miracles

HERODIAS Ho! ho! miracles! I do not believe in miracles I have seen too many (*To the PAGE*) My fan

FIRST NAZARENE This man worketh true miracles Thus, at a marriage which took place in a little town of Galilee, a town of some importance, He changed water into wine Cer-

tain persons who were present related it to me Also He healed two lepers that were seated before the Gate of Capernaum simply by touching them

SECOND NAZARENE Nay, it was blind men that He healed at Capernaum

FIRST NAZARENE Nay, they were lepers But He hath healed blind people also, and He was seen on a mountain talking with angels

A SADDUCEE Angels do not exist

A PHARISEE Angels exist, but I do not believe that this Man has talked with them

FIRST NAZARENE He was seen by a great multitude of people talking with angels

HERODIAS How these men worry me! They are ridiculous! (*To the PAGE*) Well! my fan! (*The PAGE gives her the fan*) You have a dreamer's look, you must not dream It is only sick people who dream (*She strikes the PAGE with her fan*)

SECOND NAZARENE There is also the miracle of the daughter of Jairus

FIRST NAZARENE Yea, that is sure No man can gainsay it

HERODIAS These men are mad They have looked too long on the moon Command them to be silent,

HEROD What is this miracle of the daughter of Jairus?

FIRST NAZARENE The daughter of Jairus was dead This Man raised her from the dead

HEROD How! He raises people from the dead?

FIRST NAZARENE Yea, sire, He raiseth the dead

HEROD I do not wish Him to do that I forbid Him to do that I suffer no man to raise the dead This Man must be found and told that I forbid Him to raise the dead Where is this Man at present?

SECOND NAZARENE He is in every place, my lord, but it is hard to find Him

FIRST NAZARENE It is said that He is now in Samaria

A JEW It is easy to see that this is not the Messiah, if He is in Samaria It is not to the Samaritans that the Messiah shall come The Samaritans are accursed They bring no offerings to the Temple

SECOND NAZARENE He left Samaria a few days since I think that at the present moment He is in the neighborhood of Jerusalem

FIRST NAZARENE No, He is not there I have just come from Jerusalem For two months they have had no tidings of Him

HEROD No matter! But let them find Him, and tell Him, thus saith Herod the King, "I will not suffer Thee to raise the dead!" To change water into wine, to heal the lepers and the blind . . . He may do these things if He will I say nothing against these things In truth I hold it a kindly deed to heal a leper But no man shall raise the dead It would be terrible if the dead came back.

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN Ah! the wanton one! The harlot! Ah! the daughter of Babylon with her golden eyes and her gilded eyelids! Thus saith the Lord God, Let there come up against her a multitude of men Let the people take stones and stone her

HERODIAS Command him to be silent

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN Let the captains of the hosts pierce her with their swords, let them crush her beneath their shields

HERODIAS Nay, but it is infamous

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN It is thus that I will wipe out all wickedness from the earth, and that all women shall learn not to imitate her abominations

HERODIAS You hear what he says against me? You suffer him to revile her who is your wife?

HEROD He did not speak your name

HERODIAS What does that matter? You know well that it is I whom he seeks to revile And I am your wife, am I not?

HEROD Of a truth, dear and noble Herodias, you are my wife, and before that you were the wife of my brother

HERODIAS It was thou didst snatch me from his arms

HEROD Of a truth I was stronger than he was But let us not talk of that matter I do not desire to talk of it It is the cause of the terrible words that the prophet has

spoken Peradventure on account of it a misfortune will come Let us not speak of this matter Noble Herodias, we are not mindful of our guests Fill thou my cup, my well-beloved Ho! fill with wine the great goblets of silver, and the great goblets of glass I will drink to Cæsar There are Romans here, we must drink to Cæsar

ALL Cæsar! Cæsar!

HEROD Do you not see your daughter, how pale she is?

HERODIAS What is that to you if she be pale or not?

HEROD Never have I seen her so pale

HERODIAS You must not look at her

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN In that day the sun shall become black like sackcloth of hair, and the moon shall become like blood, and the stars of the heavens shall fall upon the earth like unripe figs that fall from the fig-tree, and the kings of the earth shall be afraid

HERODIAS Ah! Ah! I should like to see that day of which he speaks, when the moon shall become like blood, and when the stars shall fall upon the earth like unripe figs This prophet talks like a drunken man but I cannot suffer the sound of his voice I hate his voice Command him to be silent

HEROD I will not I cannot understand what it is that he saith, but it may be an omen

HERODIAS I do not believe in omens He speaks like a drunken man

HEROD It may be he is drunk with the wine of God

HERODIAS What wine is that, the wine of God? From what vineyards is it gathered? In what wine-press may one find it?

HEROD (*from this point he looks all the while at SALOMÉ*) Tigellinus, when you were at Rome of late, did the Emperor speak with you on the subject of ?

TIGELLINUS On what subject, my lord?

HEROD On what subject? Ah! I asked you a question, did I not? I have forgotten what I would have asked you

HERODIAS You are looking again at my daughter You must not look at her I have already said so

HEROD You say nothing else.

HERODIAS I say it again

HEROD And that restoration of the Temple about which they have talked so much, will anything be done? They say the veil of the sanctuary has disappeared, do they not?

HERODIAS It was thyself didst steal it Thou speakest at random and without wit I will not stay here. Let us go within

HEROD Dance for me, Salomé

HERODIAS I will not have her dance.

SALOMÉ I have no desire to dance, Tetrarch

HEROD Salomé, daughter of Herodias, dance for me

HERODIAS Peace! let her alone

HEROD I command thee to dance,
Salomé

SALOMÉ I will not dance, Tetrarch

HERODIAS (*laughing*) You see how
she obeys you

HEROD What is it to me whether she
dance or not? It is naught to me
Tonight I am happy, I am exceed-
ing happy Never have I been so
happy

FIRST SOLDIER The Tetrarch has a
somber look Has he not a somber
look?

SECOND SOLDIER Yes, he has a som-
ber look

HEROD Wherefore should I not be
happy? Cæsar, who is lord of the
world, Cæsar, who is lord of all
things, loves me well He has just
sent me most precious gifts Also he
has promised me to summon to
Rome the King of Cappadocia, who
is my enemy It may be that at Rome
he will crucify him, for he is able to
do all things that he has a mind to
Verily, Cæsar is lord Therefore I
do well to be happy There is noth-
ing in the world that can mar my
happiness

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN He shall
be seated on his throne He shall be
clothed in scarlet and purple In his
hand he shall bear a golden cup full
of his blasphemies And the angel
of the Lord shall smite him He shall
be eaten of worms

HERODIAS You hear what he says
about you He says that you will be
eaten of worms

HEROD It is not of me that he
speaks He speaks never against me
It is of the King of Cappadocia that
he speaks, the King of Cappadocia
who is mine enemy It is he who
shall be eaten of worms It is not I
Never has he spoken word against
me, this prophet, save that I sinned
in taking to wife the wife of my
brother It may be he is right For,
of a truth, you are sterile

HERODIAS I am sterile, I? You say
that, you that are ever looking at my
daughter, you that would have her
dance for your pleasure? You speak
as a fool I have borne a child You
have gotten no child, no, not on one
of your slaves It is you who are
sterile, not I

HEROD Peace, woman! I say that
you are sterile You have borne me
no child, and the prophet says that
our marriage is not a true marriage
He says that it is a marriage of in-
cest, a marriage that will bring evils

I fear he is right, I am sure
that he is right I would be happy
at this Of a truth, I am happy
There is nothing I lack

HERODIAS I am glad you are of so
fair a humor tonight It is not your
custom But it is late Let us go
within Do not forget that we hunt
at sunrise All honors must be shown
to Cæsar's ambassadors, must they
not?

SECOND SOLDIER The Tetrarch has a
somber look

FIRST SOLDIER Yes, he has a somber
look

HEROD Salomé, Salomé, dance for
me I pray thee dance for me I am
sad tonight Yes, I am passing sad

tonight When I came hither I slipped in blood, which is an evil omen, also I heard in the air a beating of wings, a beating of giant wings I cannot tell what they mean

I am sad tonight Therefore dance for me Dance for me, Salomé, I beseech thee If thou dancest for me thou mayest ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee, even unto the half of my kingdom

SALOMÉ (*rising*) Will you indeed give me whatsoever I shall ask of thee, Tetrarch?

HERODIAS Do not dance, my daughter

HEROD Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, even unto the half of my kingdom

SALOMÉ You swear it, Tetrarch?

HEROD I swear it, Salomé

HERODIAS Do not dance, my daughter

SALOMÉ By what will you swear this thing, Tetrarch?

HEROD By my life, by my crown, by my gods Whatsoever thou shalt desire I will give it thee, even to the half of my kingdom, if thou wilt but dance for me O Salomé, Salomé, dance for me!

SALOMÉ You have sworn an oath, Tetrarch

HEROD I have sworn an oath

HERODIAS My daughter, do not dance

HEROD Even to the half of my king-

dom Thou wilt be passing fair as a queen, Salomé, if it please thee to ask for half of my kingdom Will she not be fair as a queen? Ah! it is cold here! There is an icy wind, and I hear wherefore do I hear in the air this beating of wings? Ah! one might fancy a huge black bird that hovers over the terrace Why can I not see it, this bird? The beat of its wings is terrible The breath of the wind of its wings is terrible It is a chill wind Nay, but it is not cold, it is hot I am choking Pour water on my hands Give me snow to eat Loosen my mantle Quick! quick! loosen my mantle Nay, but leave it It is my garland that hurts me, my garland of roses The flowers are like fire They have burned my forehead (*He tears the wreath from his head and throws it on the table*) Ah! I can breathe now How red those petals are! They are like stains of blood on the cloth That does not matter It is not wise to find symbols in everything that one sees It makes life too full of terrors It were better to say that stains of blood are as lovely as rose petals It were better far to say that But we will not speak of this Now I am happy I am passing happy Have I not the right to be happy? Your daughter is going to dance for me Wilt thou not dance for me, Salomé? Thou hast promised to dance for me

HERODIAS I will not have her dance

SALOMÉ I will dance for you, Tetrarch

HEROD You hear what your daughter says She is going to dance for me Thou doest well to dance for me, Salomé And when thou hast danced for me, forget not to ask of

me whatsoever thou hast a mind to ask Whatsoever thou shalt desire I will give it thee, even to the half of my kingdom I have sworn it, have I not?

SALOMÉ Thou hast sworn it, Tetrarch

HEROD And I have never broken my word I am not of those who break their oaths I know not how to lie I am the slave of my word, and my word is the word of a king The King of Cappadocia had ever a lying tongue, but he is no true king He is a coward Also he owes me money that he will not repay He has even insulted my ambassadors He has spoken words that were wounding But Cæsar will crucify him when he comes to Rome I know that Cæsar will crucify him And if he crucify him not, yet will he die, being eaten of worms The prophet has prophesied it Well! wherefore dost thou tarry, Salomé?

SALOMÉ I am waiting until my slaves bring perfumes to me and the seven veils, and take from off my feet my sandals

(Slaves bring perfumes and the seven veils, and take off the sandals of SALOMÉ)

HEROD Ah, thou art to dance with naked feet 'Tis well! 'Tis well Thy little feet will be like white doves They will be like little white flowers that dance upon the trees No, no, she is going to dance on blood There is blood spilt on the ground She must not dance on blood It were an evil omen

HERODIAS What is it to thee if she dance on blood? Thou hast waded deep enough in it .

HEROD What is it to me? Ah! look at the moon! She has become red She has become red as blood Ah! the prophet prophesied truly He prophesied that the moon would become as blood Did he not prophesy it? All of ye heard him prophesying it And now the moon has become as blood Do ye not see it?

HERODIAS Oh, yes, I see it well, and the stars are falling like unripe figs, are they not? and the sun is becoming black like sackcloth of hair, and the kings of the earth are afraid That at least one can see The prophet is justified of his words in that at least, for truly the kings of the earth are afraid Let us go within You are sick They will say at Rome that you are mad Let us go within, I tell you

THE VOICE OF JOKANAAN Who is this who cometh from Edom, who is this who cometh from Bozra, whose raiment is dyed with purple, who shineth in the beauty of his garments, who walketh mighty in his greatness? Wherefore is thy raiment stained with scarlet?

HERODIAS Let us go within The voice of that man maddens me I will not have my daughter dance while he is continually crying out I will not have her dance while you look at her in this fashion In a word, I will not have her dance

HEROD Do not rise, my wife, my queen, it will avail thee nothing I will not go within till she hath danced Dance, Salomé, dance for me

HERODIAS Do not dance, my daughter

SALOMÉ I am ready, Tetrarch
(*SALOMÉ dances the dance of the seven veils*)

HEROD Ah! wonderfull wonderfull
You see that she has danced for me,
your daughter Come near, Salomé,
come near, that I may give thee thy
fee Ah! I pay a royal price to those
who dance for my pleasure I will
pay thee royally I will give thee
whatsoever thy soul desireth What
wouldst thou have? Speak

SALOMÉ (*kneeling*) I would that
they presently bring me in a silver
charger

HEROD (*laughing*) In a silver
charger? Surely yes, in a silver
charger She is charming, is she not?
What is it thou wouldst have in a
silver charger, O sweet and fair
Salomé, thou art fairer than all the
daughters of Judæa? What wouldst
thou have them bring thee in a
silver charger? Tell me Whatsoever
it may be, thou shalt receive it My
treasures belong to thee What is it
that thou wouldst have, Salomé?

SALOMÉ (*rising*) The head of
Jokanaan

HERODIAS Ah! that is well said, my
daughter

HEROD No, no!

HERODIAS That is well said, my
daughter

HEROD No, no, Salomé It is not that
thou desirest Do not listen to thy
mother's voice She is ever giving
thee evil counsel Do not heed her

SALOMÉ It is not my mother's voice
that I heed It is for mine own pleas-

ure that I ask the head of Jokanaan
in a silver charger You have sworn
an oath, Herod Forget not that you
have sworn an oath

HEROD I know it I have sworn an
oath by my gods I know it well
But I pray thee, Salomé, ask of me
something else Ask of me the half
of my kingdom, and I will give it
thee But ask not of me what thy
lips have asked

SALOMÉ I ask of you the head of
Jokanaan

HEROD No, no, I will not give it
thee

SALOMÉ You have sworn an oath,
Herod

HERODIAS Yes, you have sworn an
oath Everybody heard you You
swore it before everybody

HEROD Peace, woman! It is not to
you I speak

HERODIAS My daughter has done
well to ask the head of Jokanaan He
has covered me with insults He has
said unspeakable things against me
One can see that she loves her
mother well Do not yield, my
daughter He has sworn an oath, he
has sworn an oath

HEROD Peace! Speak not to me! .
Salomé, I pray thee be not stub-
born I have ever been kind toward
thee I have ever loved thee . . .
It may be that I have loved thee too
much Therefore ask not this thing
of me This is a terrible thing, an
awful thing to ask of me Surely, I
think thou art jesting The head of a
man that is cut from his body is ill
to look upon, is it not? It is not meet

that the eyes of a virgin should look upon such a thing What pleasure couldst thou have in it? There is no pleasure that thou couldst have in it No, no, it is not that thou desirest Harken to me I have an emerald, a great emerald, thou canst see that which passeth afar off Cæsar himself carries such an emerald when he goes to the circus But my emerald is the larger I know well that it is the larger It is the largest emerald in the whole world Thou wilt take that, wilt thou not? Ask it of me, and I will give it thee

SALOMÉ I demand the head of Jokanaan

HEROD Thou art not listening Thou art not listening Suffer me to speak, Salomé

SALOMÉ The head of Jokanaan

HEROD No, no, thou wouldst not have that Thou sayest that but to trouble me, because I have looked at thee and ceased not this night It is true, I have looked at thee and ceased not this night Thy beauty has troubled me Thy beauty has grievously troubled me, and I have looked at thee over-much Nay, but I will look at thee no more One should not look at anything Neither at things, nor at people should one look Only in mirrors is it well to look, for mirrors do but show us masks Oh! oh! bring wine! I thirst

Salomé, Salomé, let us be as friends Bethink thee Ah! what would I say? What was't? Ah! I remember it! Salomé—nay but come nearer to me, I fear thou wilt not hear my words—Salomé, thou knowest my white peacocks, my beautiful white peacocks, that walk in the garden between the

myrtles and the tall cypress trees Their beaks are gilded with gold and the grains that they eat are smeared with gold, and their feet are stained with purple When they cry out the rain comes, and the moon shows herself in the heavens when they spread their tails Two by two they walk between the cypress trees and the black myrtles, and each has a slave to tend it Sometimes they fly across the trees, and anon they crouch in the grass, and round the pools of the water There are not in all the world birds so wonderful I know that Cæsar himself has no birds so far as my birds I will give thee fifty of my peacocks They will follow thee whithersoever thou goest, and in the midst of them thou wilt be like unto the moon in the midst of a great white cloud I will give them to thee all I have but a hundred, and in the whole world there is no king who has peacocks like unto my peacocks But I will give them all to thee Only thou must loose me from my oath, and must not ask of me that which thy lips have asked of me (*He empties the cup of wine*)

SALOMÉ Give me the head of Jokanaan

HERODIAS Well said, my daughter! As for you, you are ridiculous with your peacocks

HEROD Ah! thou art not listening to me Be calm As for me, am I not calm? I am altogether calm Listen I have jewels hidden in this palace—jewels that thy mother even has never seen, jewels that are marvellous to look at I have a collar of pearls, set in four rows They are like unto moons chained with rays of silver They are even as half a

hundred moons caught in a golden net On the ivory breast of a queen they have rested Thou shalt be as fair as a queen when thou wearest them I have amethysts of two kinds, one that is black like wine, and one that is red like wine that one has colored with water I have topazes, yellow as are the eyes of tigers, and topazes that are pink as the eyes of a wood-pigeon, and green topazes that are as the eyes of cats I have opals that burn always, with a flame that is cold as ice, opals that make sad men's minds, and are afraid of the shadows I have onyxes like the eyeballs of a dead woman I have moonstones that change when the moon changes, and are wan when they see the sun I have sapphires big like eggs, and as blue as blue flowers The sea wanders within them and the moon comes never to trouble the blue of their waves I have chrysolites and beryls and chrysoprases and rubies I have sardonyx and hyacinth stones, and stones of chalcedony, and I will give them all unto thee, all, and other things will I add to them The King of the Indies has but even now sent me four fans fashioned from the feathers of parrots, and the King of Numidia a garment of ostrich feathers I have a crystal, into which it is not lawful for a woman to look, nor may young men behold it until they have been beaten with rods In a coffer of nacre I have three wondrous turquoises He who wears them on his forehead can imagine things which are not, and he who carries them in his hand can turn the fruitful woman into a woman that is barren These are great treasures above all price But this is not all In an ebony coffer I have two cups, amber, that are like apples of pure gold If an enemy pour poison

into these cups they become like apples of silver In a coffer incrustéd with amber I have sandals incrustéd with glass I have mantles that have been brought from the land of the Seres, and bracelets decked about with carbuncles and with jade that come from the city of Euphrates

What desirest thou more than this, Salomé! Tell me the thing that thou desirest, and I will give it thee All that thou askest I will give thee, save one thing only I will give thee all that is mine, save only the head of one man I will give thee the mantle of the high priest I will give thee the veil of the sanctuary

THE JEWS Oh! oh!

SALOMÉ Give me the head of Jokanaan

HEROD (*sinking back in his seat*)
Let her be given what she asks! Of a truth she is her mother's child!
(*The FIRST SOLDIER approaches HERODIAS draws from the hand of the Tetrarch the ring of death, and gives it to the SOLDIER, who straightway bears it to the EXECUTIONER The EXECUTIONER looks scared*)
Who has taken my ring? There was a ring on my right hand Who has drunk my wine? There was wine in my cup It was full of wine Some one has drunk it! Oh! surely some evil will befall some one (*The EXECUTIONER goes down into the cistern*) Ah! Wherefore did I give my oath? Hereafter, let no king swear an oath If he keep it not, it is terrible, and if he keep it, it is terrible also

HERODIAS My daughter has done well

HEROD I am sure that some misfortune will happen

SALOMÉ (*she leans over the cistern and listens*) There is no sound I hear nothing Why does he not cry out, this man? Ah! if any man sought to kill me, I would cry out, I would struggle, I would not suffer.

Strike, strike, Naaman, strike I tell you No, I hear nothing

There is a silence, a terrible silence Ah! something has fallen upon the ground I heard something fall He is afraid, this slave He is a coward, this slave! Let soldiers be sent (*She sees the PAGE of HERODIAS and addresses him*) Come hither, thou wert the friend of him who is dead, wert thou not? Well, I tell thee, there are not dead men enough Go to the soldiers and bid them go down and bring me the thing I ask, the thing the Tetrarch has promised me, the thing that is mine (*The PAGE recoils She turns to the SOLDIERS*) Hither, ye soldiers Get ye down into this cistern and bring me the head of this man Tetrarch, Tetrarch, command your soldiers that they bring me the head of Jokanaan (*A huge black arm, the arm of the EXECUTIONER, comes forth from the cistern, bearing on a silver shield the head of JOKANAAN SALOMÉ seizes it HEROD hides his face with his cloak HERODIAS smiles and fans herself The NAZARENES fall on their knees and begin to pray*) Ah! thou wouldst not suffer me to kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan Well, I will kiss it now I will bite it with my teeth as one bites a ripe fruit Yes, I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan I said it, did I not say it? I said it Ah! I will kiss it now But, wherefore dost thou not look at me, Jokanaan? Thine eyes that were so terrible, so full of rage and scorn, are shut now Wherefore are they shut? Open thine eyes! Lift up thine eyelids, Jokanaan! Wherefore dost

thou not look at me? Art thou afraid of me, Jokanaan, that thou wilt not look at me?

And thy tongue, that was like a red snake darting poison, it moves no more, it speaks no words, Jokanaan, that scarlet viper that spat its venom upon me It is strange, is it not? How is it that the red viper stirs no longer?

Thou wouldst have none of me, Jokanaan Thou rejectedst me Thou didst speak evil words against me Thou didst bear thyself toward me as to a harlot, as to a woman that is a wanton, to me, Salomé, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judæa! Well, I still live, but thou art dead, and thy head belongs to me I can do with it what I will I can throw it to the dogs and to the birds of the air That which the dogs leave, the birds of the air shall devour.

Ah, Jokanaan, thou wert the man that I loved alone among men All other men were hateful to me But thou wert beautiful Thy body was a column of ivory set upon feet of silver It was a garden full of doves and lilies of silver It was a tower of silver decked with shields of ivory There was nothing in the world so white as thy body There was nothing in the world so black as thy hair In the whole world there was nothing so red as thy mouth Thy voice was a censer that scattered strange perfumes, and when I looked on thee I heard a strange music Ah! wherefore didst thou not look at me, Jokanaan? With the cloak of thine hands and with the cloak of thy blasphemies thou didst hide thy face Thou didst put upon thine eyes the covering of him who would see his God Well, thou hast seen thy God, Jokanaan, but me, me, thou didst never see If thou hadst seen me thou hadst loved me I saw thee, and I loved thee Oh, how I

loved thee! I love thee yet, Jokanaan, I love only thee I am athirst for thy beauty, I am hungry for thy body, and neither wine nor apples can appease my desire What shall I do now, Jokanaan? Neither the floods nor the great waters can quench my passion I was a princess, and thou didst scorn me I was a virgin, and thou didst take my virginity from me I was chaste, and thou didst fill my veins with fire

Ah! ah! wherefore didst thou not look at me? If thou hadst looked at me thou hadst loved me Well I know that thou wouldst have loved me, and the mystery of love is greater than the mystery of death

HEROD She is monstrous, thy daughter, I tell thee she is monstrous In truth, what she has done is a great crime I am sure that it is A crime against some unknown God

HERODIAS I am well pleased with my daughter She has done well And I would stay here now

HEROD (*rising*) Ah! There speaks my brother's wife! Come! I will not

stay in this place Come, I tell thee Surely some terrible thing will befall Manasseh, Issadar, Zias, put out the torches I will not look at things, I will not suffer things to look at me Put out the torches! Hide the moon! Hide the stars! Let us hide ourselves in our palace, Herodias I begin to be afraid

(The slaves put out the torches The stars disappear A great cloud crosses the moon and conceals it completely The stage becomes quite dark The Tetrarch begins to climb the staircase)

THE VOICE OF SALOMÉ Ah! I have kissed thy mouth, Jokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth There was a bitter taste on my lips Was it the taste of blood? Nay, but perchance it was the taste of love They say that love hath a bitter taste

But what matter? What matter? I have kissed thy mouth

HEROD (*turning round and seeing SALOMÉ*) Kill that woman! *(The soldiers rush forward and crush beneath their shields SALOMÉ, daughter of HERODIAS, Princess of Judæa)*

CURTAIN

The Rising of the Moon

BY LADY GREGORY

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SAMUEL FRENCH, INC
25 WEST 45TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

CHARACTERS

SERGEANT
POLICEMAN X
POLICEMAN B
A RAGGED MAN

THE RISING OF THE MOON

Scene Side of a quay in a seaport town Some posts and chains A large barrel Enter three policemen Moonlight

SERGEANT, who is older than the others, crosses the stage to right and looks down steps The others put down a pastepot and unroll a bundle of placards

POLICEMAN B I think this would be a good place to put up a notice (*He points to barrel*)

POLICEMAN X Better ask him (*Calls to SERGEANT*) Will this be a good place for a placard?
(*No answer*)

POLICEMAN B Will we put up a notice here on the barrel?
(*No answer*)

SERGEANT There's a flight of steps here that leads to the water This is a place that should be minded well If he got down here, his friends might have a boat to meet him, they might send it in here from outside

POLICEMAN B Would the barrel be a good place to put a notice up?

SERGEANT It might, you can put it there
(*They paste the notice up*)

SERGEANT (*reading it*) Dark hair—dark eyes, smooth face, height five feet five—there's not much to take hold of in that—It's a pity I had no chance of seeing him before he broke out of gaol They say he's a wonder, that it's he makes all the plans for the whole organization There isn't another man in Ireland would have broken gaol the way he did He must have some friends among the gaolers

POLICEMAN B A hundred pounds is little enough for the Government to offer for him You may be sure any man in the force that takes him will get promotion

SERGEANT I'll mind this place myself I wouldn't wonder at all if he came this way He might come slipping along there (*points to side of quay*), and his friends might be waiting for him there (*points down steps*), and once he got away it's little chance we'd have of finding him, it's maybe under a load of kelp he'd be in a fishing boat, and not one to help a married man that wants it to the reward

POLICEMAN X And if we get him itself, nothing but abuse on our heads for it from the people, and maybe from our own relations

SERGEANT Well, we have to do our duty in the force Haven't we the whole country depending on us to keep law and order? It's those that are down would be up and those that are up would be down, if it wasn't for us Well, hurry on, you have plenty of other places to placard yet, and come back here then to me You can take the lantern Don't be too long now It's very lonesome here with nothing but the moon

POLICEMAN B It's a pity we can't stop with you The Government should have brought more police into the town, with *him* in gaol, and at assize time too Well, good luck to your watch (*They go out*)

SERGEANT (*walks up and down once or twice and looks at placard*) A hundred pounds and promotion sure There must be a great deal of spending in a hundred pounds It's a pity some honest man not to be the better of that

(*A ragged man appears at left and tries to slip past* SERGEANT *suddenly turns*)

SERGEANT Where are you going?

MAN I'm a poor ballad-singer, your honor I thought to sell some of these (*holds out bundle of ballads*) to the sailors (*He goes on*)

SERGEANT Stop! Didn't I tell you to stop? You can't go on there

MAN Oh, very well It's a hard thing to be poor All the world's against the poor!

SERGEANT Who are you?

MAN You'd be as wise as myself if I told you, but I don't mind I'm one Jimmy Walsh, a ballad-singer

SERGEANT Jimmy Walsh? I don't know that name

MAN Ah, sure, they know it well enough in Ennis Were you ever in Ennis, Sergeant?

SERGEANT What brought you here?

MAN Sure, it's to the assizes I came, thinking I might make a few shil-

lings here or there It's in the one tram with the judges I came

SERGEANT Well, if you came so far, you may as well go farther, for you'll walk out of this

MAN I will, I will, I'll just go on where I was going (*Goes toward steps*)

SERGEANT Come back from those steps, no one has leave to pass down them tonight

MAN I'll just sit on the top of the steps till I see will some sailor buy a ballad off me that would give me my supper They do be late going back to the ship It's often I saw them in Cork carried down the quay in a hand-cart

SERGEANT Move on, I tell you I won't have any one lingering about the quay tonight

MAN Well, I'll go It's the poor have the hard life! Maybe yourself might like one, Sergeant Here's a good sheet now (*Turns one over*) "Content and a pipe"—that's not much "The Peeler and the Goat"—you wouldn't like that "Johnny Hart"—that's a lovely song

SERGEANT Move on

MAN Ah, wait till you hear it (*Sings*)

*There was a rich farmer's daughter
lived near the town of Ross,
She courted a Highland soldier,
his name was Johnny Hart,
Says the mother to her daughter,
"I'll go distracted mad
If you marry that Highland soldier
dressed up in Highland
plaid"*

SERGEANT Stop that noise
(*MAN wraps up his ballads and shuffles toward the steps*)

SERGEANT Where are you going?

MAN Sure you told me to be going,
and I am going

SERGEANT Don't be a fool I didn't
tell you to go that way, I told you
to go back to the town

MAN Back to the town, is it?

SERGEANT (*taking him by the shoulder and shoving him before him*)
Here, I'll show you the way Be off
with you What are you stopping
for?

MAN (*who has been keeping his eye on the notice, points to it*) I think I
know what you're waiting for, Sergeant

SERGEANT What's that to you?

MAN And I know well the man
you're waiting for—I know him well
—I'll be going (*He shuffles on*)

SERGEANT You know him? Come
back here What sort is he?

MAN Come back is it, Sergeant? Do
you want to have me killed?

SERGEANT Why do you say that?

MAN Never mind I'm going I
wouldn't be in your shoes if the reward
was ten times as much (*Goes on off stage to left*) Not if it was ten
times as much

SERGEANT (*rushing after him*)
Come back here, come back (*Drags him back*) What sort is he? Where
did you see him?

MAN I saw him in my own place, in
the County Clare I tell you you
wouldn't like to be looking at him
You'd be afraid to be in the one
place with him There isn't a
weapon he doesn't know the use of,
and as to strength, his muscles are
as hard as that board (*Slaps barrel*)

SERGEANT Is he as bad as that?

MAN He is then

SERGEANT Do you tell me so?

MAN There was a poor man in
our place, a sergeant from Bally-
vaughan—It was with a lump of
stone he did it

SERGEANT I never heard of that

MAN And you wouldn't, Sergeant
It's not everything that happens
gets into the papers And there was
a policeman in plain clothes, too

It is in Limerick he was
It was after the time of the attack
on the police barrack at Kilmallock
Moonlight . . . just like this
waterside . . . Nothing was
known for certain

SERGEANT Do you say so? It's a terrible
county to belong to

MAN That's so, indeed! You might
be standing there, looking out that
way, thinking you saw him coming
up this side of the quay (*points*),
and he might be coming up this
other side (*points*), and he'd be on
you before you knew where you
were

SERGEANT It's a whole troop of police
they ought to put here to stop a
man like that

MAN But if you'd like me to stop with you, I could be looking down this side I could be sitting up here on this barrel

SERGEANT And you know him well, too?

MAN I'd know him a mile off, Sergeant

SERGEANT But you wouldn't want to share the reward?

MAN Is it a poor man like me, that has to be going the roads and singing in fairs, to have the name on him that he took a reward? But you don't want me I'll be safer in the town

SERGEANT Well, you can stop

MAN (*getting up on barrel*) All right, Sergeant I wonder, now, you're not tired out, Sergeant, walking up and down the way you are

SERGEANT If I'm tired I'm used to it

MAN You might have hard work before you tonight yet Take it easy while you can There's plenty of room up here on the barrel, and you see farther when you're higher up

SERGEANT Maybe so (*Gets up beside him on barrel, facing right They sit back to back, looking different ways*) You made me feel a bit queer with the way you talked

MAN Give me a match, Sergeant (*he gives it and MAN lights pipe*), take a draw yourself? It'll quiet you Wait now till I give you a light, but you needn't turn round Don't take your eye off the quay for the life of you

SERGEANT Never fear, I won't (*Lights pipe They both smoke*) Indeed it's a hard thing to be in the force, out at night and no thanks for it, for all the danger we're in And it's little we get but abuse from the people, and no choice but to obey our orders, and never asked when a man is sent into danger, if you are a married man with a family

MAN (*sings*)

*As through the hills I walked to
view the hills and shamrock
plain,*

*I stood awhile where nature
smiles to view the rocks and
streams,*

*On a matron fair I fixed my eyes
beneath a fertile vale,
As she sang her song it was on the
wrong of poor old Granuaile*

SERGEANT Stop that, that's no song to be singing in these times

MAN Ah, Sergeant, I was only singing to keep my heart up It sinks when I think of him To think of us two sitting here, and he creeping up the quay, maybe, to get to us

SERGEANT Are you keeping a good lookout?

MAN I am, and for no reward too Amn't I the foolish man? But when I saw a man in trouble, I never could help trying to get him out of it What's that? Did something hit me? (*Rubs his heart*)

SERGEANT (*patting him on the shoulder*) You will get your reward in heaven

MAN I know that, I know that, Sergeant, but life is precious

SERGEANT Well, you can sing if it gives you more courage

MAN (*sings*)

*Her head was bare, her hands
and feet with iron bands were
bound,*

*Her pensive strain and plaintive
wail mingles with the evening
gale,*

*And the song she sang with
mournful air, I am old Granu-
aile*

*Her lips so sweet that monarchs
kissed*

SERGEANT That's not it "Her gown she wore was stained with gore" That's it—you missed that

MAN You're right, Sergeant, so it is, I missed it (*Repeats line*) But to think of a man like you knowing a song like that

SERGEANT There's many a thing a man might know and might not have any wish for

MAN Now, I daresay, Sergeant, in your youth, you used to be sitting up on a wall, the way you are sitting up on this barrel now, and the other lads beside you, and you singing "Granuaile"?

SERGEANT I did then

MAN And the "Shan Bhean Bhocht"?

SERGEANT I did then

MAN And the "Green on the Cape"?

SERGEANT That was one of them

MAN And maybe the man you are

watching for tonight used to be sitting on the wall, when he was young, and singing those same songs It's a queer world

SERGEANT Whisht! I think I see something coming It's only a dog

MAN And isn't it a queer world?

Maybe it's one of the boys you used to be singing with that time you will be arresting today or tomorrow, and sending into the dock

SERGEANT That's true inded

MAN And maybe one night, after you had been singing, if the other boys had told you some plan they had, some plan to free the country, you might have joined with them and maybe it is you might be in trouble now

SERGEANT Well, who knows but I might? I had a great spirit in those days

MAN It's a queer world, Sergeant, and it's little any mother knows when she sees her child creeping on the floor what might happen to it before it has gone through its life, or who will be who in the end

SERGEANT That's a queer thought now, and a true thought Wait now till I think it out If it wasn't for the sense I have, and for my wife and family, and for me joining the force the time I did, it might be myself now would be after breaking gaol and hiding in the dark, and it might be him that's hiding in the dark and that got out of gaol would be sitting up where I am on this barrel And it might be myself would be creeping up trying to

make my escape from himself, and it might be himself would be keeping the law, and myself would be breaking it, and myself would be trying maybe to put a bullet in his head, or to take up a lump of a stone the way you said he did no, that myself did Oh! (*Gasps After a pause*) What's that? (*Gasps MAN's arm*)

MAN (*jumps off barrel and listens, looking out over water*) It's nothing, Sergeant

SERGEANT I thought it might be a boat I had a notion there might be friends of his coming about the quays with a boat

MAN Sergeant, I am thinking it was with the people you were, and not with the law you were, when you were a young man

SERGEANT Well, if I was foolish then, that time's gone

MAN Maybe, Sergeant, it comes into your head sometimes, in spite of your belt and your tunic, that it might have been as well for you to have followed Granuaile

SERGEANT It's no business of yours what I think

MAN Maybe, Sergeant, you'll be on the side of the country yet

SERGEANT (*gets off barrel*) Don't talk to me like that I have my duties and I know them (*Looks round*) That was a boat, I hear the oars (*Goes to the steps and looks down*)

MAN (*sings*)
O, then, tell me, Shawn O'Farrell,

*Where the gathering is to be
In the old spot by the river
Right well known to you and me!*

SERGEANT Stop that! Stop that, I tell you!

MAN (*sings louder*)
*One word more, for signal token,
Whistle up the marching tune,
With your pike upon your shoulder,
At the Rising of the Moon*

SERGEANT If you don't stop that, I'll arrest you
(*A whistle from below answers, repeating the air*)

SERGEANT That's a signal (*Stands between him and steps*) You must not pass this way Step farther back Who are you? You are no ballad-singer

MAN You needn't ask who I am, that placard will tell you (*Points to placard*)

SERGEANT You are the man I am looking for

MAN (*takes off hat and wig* SERGEANT *seizes them*) I am. There's a hundred pounds on my head There is a friend of mine below in a boat He knows a safe place to bring me to

SERGEANT (*looking still at hat and wig*) It's a pity! It's a pity You deceived me You deceived me well

MAN I am a friend of Granuaile There is a hundred pounds on my head

SERGEANT It's a pity, it's a pity!

MAN Will you let me pass, or must I make you let me?

SERGEANT I am in the force I will not let you pass

MAN I thought to do it with my tongue (*Puts hand in breast*) What is that?

(*Voice of POLICEMAN X outside*) Here, this is where we left him

SERGEANT It's my comrades coming

MAN You won't betray me the friend of Granuaile (*Slips behind barrel*)

(*Voice of POLICEMAN B*) That was the last of the placards

POLICEMAN X (*as they come in*) If he makes his escape it won't be unknown he'll make it
(*SERGEANT puts hat and wig behind his back*)

POLICEMAN B Did any one come this way?

SERGEANT (*after a pause*) No one

POLICEMAN B No one at all?

SERGEANT No one at all

POLICEMAN B We had no orders to go back to the station, we can stop along with you

SERGEANT I don't want you There is nothing for you to do here

POLICEMAN B You bade us to come back here and keep watch with you

SERGEANT I'd sooner be alone

Would any man come this way and you making all that talk? It is better the place to be quiet

POLICEMAN B Well, we'll leave you the lantern anyhow (*Hands it to him*)

SERGEANT I don't want it Bring it with you

POLICEMAN B You might want it There are clouds coming up and you have the darkness of the night before you yet I'll leave it over here on the barrel (*Goes to barrel*)

SERGEANT Bring it with you I tell you No more talk

POLICEMAN B Well, I thought it might be a comfort to you I often think when I have it in my hand and can be flashing it about into every dark corner (*doing so*) that it's the same as being beside the fire at home, and the bits of bogwood blazing up now and again (*Flashes it about, now on the barrel, now on SERGEANT*)

SERGEANT (*furious*) Be off the two of you, yourselves and your lantern! (*They go out MAN comes from behind barrel He and SERGEANT stand looking at one another*)

SERGEANT What are you waiting for?

MAN For my hat, of course, and my wig You wouldn't wish me to get my death of cold?
(*SERGEANT gives them*)

MAN (*going toward steps*) Well, good night, comrade, and thank you You did me a good turn to-night, and I'm obliged to you.

Maybe I'll be able to do as much
for you when the small rise up and
the big fall down when we all
change places at the Rising (*waves*
his hand and disappears) of the
Moon

SERGEANT (*turning his back to*
audience and reading placard) A
hundred pounds reward! A hundred
pounds! (*Turns toward audience*)
I wonder, now, am I as great a fool
as I think I am?

CURTAIN

The Boor

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY ANTON CHEKOV

TRANSLATED BY HILMAR BAUKHAGE

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CHARACTERS

HELENA IVANOVNA POPOV, *a young widow, mistress of a country estate*

GRIGORI STEPANOVITCH SMIRNOV, *proprietor of a country estate*

LUKA, *servant of Mrs POPOV*

A gardener

A coachman

Several workmen

SCENE The estate of Mrs Popov

TIME The present

THE BOOR

SCENE—A well-furnished reception-room in MRS POPOV'S home

MRS POPOV is discovered in deep mourning, sitting upon a sofa, gazing steadfastly at a photograph. LUKA is also present

LUKA It isn't right, ma'am You're wearing yourself out! The maid and the cook have gone looking for berries, everything that breathes is enjoying life, even the cat knows how to be happy—slips about the courtyard and catches birds—but you hide yourself here in the house as though you were in a cloister Yes, truly, by actual reckoning you haven't left this house for a whole year

MRS POPOV And I shall never leave it—why should I? My life is over He lies in his grave, and I have buried myself within these four walls We are both dead

LUKA There you are again! It's too awful to listen to, so it is! Nikolai Michailovitch is dead, it was the will of the Lord, and the Lord has given him eternal peace You have grieved over it and that ought to be enough Now it's time to stop One can't weep and wear mourning forever! My wife died a few years ago I grieved for her, I wept a whole month—and then it was over Must one be forever singing lamentations? That would be more than you husband was worth! (*He sighs*) You have forgotten all your neighbors You don't go out and you receive no one We live—you'll pardon me—like the spiders, and the good light of day we never see All the livery is eaten by the mice—as though there weren't any more

nice people in the world! But the whole neighborhood is full of gentlefolk The regiment is stationed in Riblov—officers—simply beautiful! One can't see enough of them! Every Friday a ball, and military music every day Oh, my dear, dear ma'am, young and pretty as you are, if you'd only let your spirits live! Beauty can't last forever When ten short years are over, you'll be glad enough to go out a bit and meet the officers—and then it'll be too late

MRS POPOV (*resolutely*) Please don't speak of these things again You know very well that since the death of Nikolai Michailovitch my life is absolutely nothing to me You think I live, but it only seems so Do you understand? Oh, that his departed soul may see how I love him! I know, it's no secret to you, he was often unjust toward me, cruel, and—he wasn't faithful, but I shall be faithful to the grave and prove to him how I can love There, in the Beyond, he'll find me the same as I was until his death

LUKA What is the use of all these words, when you'd so much rather go walking in the garden or order Toby or Welkan harnessed to the trap, and visit the neighbors?

MRS POPOV (*weeping*) Oh!

LUKA Madam, dear Madam, what is it? In Heaven's name!

MRS POPOV He loved Toby so! He always drove him to the Koitschagins or the Vlassovs. What a wonderful horseman he was! How fine he looked when he pulled at the reins with all his might! Toby, Toby—give him an extra measure of oats today!

LUKA Yes, ma'am
(A bell rings loudly)

MRS POPOV (*shudders*) What's that? I am at home to no one

LUKA Yes, ma'am (*He goes out, Center*)

MRS POPOV (*gazing at the photograph*) You shall see, Nikolai, how I can love and forgive! My love will die only with me—when my poor heart stops beating (*She smiles through her tears*) And aren't you ashamed? I have been a good, true wife, I have imprisoned myself and I shall remain true until death, and you—you—you're not ashamed of yourself, my dear monster! You quarrelled with me, left me alone for weeks—

(LUKA enters in great excitement)

LUKA Oh, ma'am, someone is asking for you, insists on seeing you—

MRS POPOV You told him that since my husband's death I receive no one?

LUKA I said so, but he won't listen, he says it is a pressing matter

MRS POPOV I receive no one!

LUKA I told him that, but he's a wildman, he swore and pushed himself into the room, he's in the dining-room now.

MRS POPOV (*excitedly*) Good Show him in The impudent—!
(LUKA goes out, Center)

MRS POPOV What a bore people are! What can they want with me? Why do they disturb my peace? (*She sighs*) Yes, it is clear I must enter a convent (*Meditatively*) Yes, a convent
(SMIRNOV enters, followed by LUKA)

SMIRNOV (*to LUKA*) Fool, you make too much noise! You're an ass! (*Discovering MRS POPOV—politely*) Madam, I have the honor to introduce myself Lieutenant in the Artillery, retired, country gentleman, Grigori Stepanovitch Smirnov! I'm compelled to bother you about an exceedingly important matter

MRS POPOV (*without offering her hand*) What is it you wish?

SMIRNOV Your deceased husband, with whom I had the honor to be acquainted, left me two notes amounting to about twelve hundred rubles. Inasmuch as I have to pay the interest tomorrow on a loan from the Agrarian Bank, I should like to request, madam, that you pay me the money today

MRS POPOV Twelve hundred—and for what was my husband indebted to you?

SMIRNOV He bought oats from me

MRS POPOV (*with a sigh, to LUKA*) Don't forget to give Toby an extra measure of oats
(LUKA goes out)

MRS POPOV (*to SMIRNOV*) If Nikolai Michailovitch is indebted to you,

I shall of course pay you, but I am sorry, I haven't the money today. Tomorrow my manager will return from the city and I shall notify him to pay you what is due you, but until then I cannot satisfy your request. Furthermore, today it is just seven months since the death of my husband and I am not in a mood to discuss money matters.

SMIRNOV And I am in the mood to fly up the chimney with my feet in the air if I can't lay hands on that interest tomorrow. They'll seize my estate!

MRS POPOV Day after tomorrow you will receive the money.

SMIRNOV I don't need the money day after tomorrow, I need it today.

MRS POPOV I'm sorry I can't pay you today.

SMIRNOV And I can't wait until day after tomorrow.

MRS POPOV But what can I do if I haven't it?

SMIRNOV So you can't pay?

MRS POPOV I cannot.

SMIRNOV Hm! Is that your last word?

MRS POPOV My last.

SMIRNOV Absolutely?

MRS POPOV Absolutely.

SMIRNOV Thank you (*He shrugs his shoulders*). And they expect me to stand for all that. The toll-gatherer just now met me in the

road and asked me why I was always worrying? Why in Heaven's name shouldn't I worry? I need money, I feel the knife at my throat. Yesterday morning I left my house in the early dawn and called on all my debtors. If even one of them had paid his debt! I worked the skin off my fingers! The devil knows in what sort of Jew-*inn* I slept in a room with a barrel of brandy! And now at last I come here, seventy versts from home, hope for a little money and all you give me is moods! Why shouldn't I worry?

MRS POPOV I thought I made it plain to you that my manager will return from town, and then you will get your money?

SMIRNOV I did not come to see the manager, I came to see you. What the devil—pardon the language—do I care for your manager?

MRS POPOV Really, sir, I am not used to such language or such manners. I shan't listen to you any further. (*She goes out, left*.)

SMIRNOV What can one say to that? Moods! Seven months since her husband died! Do I have to pay the interest or not? I repeat the question, have I to pay the interest or not? The husband is dead and all that, the manager is—the devil with him!—traveling somewhere. Now, tell me, what am I to do? Shall I run away from my creditors in a balloon? Or knock my head against a stone wall? If I call on Grusdev he chooses to be "not at home," Iroschevitch has simply hidden himself, I have quarrelled with Kurzin and came near throwing him out of the window, Masutov is ill and this woman has—moods! Not one of

them will pay up! And all because I've spoiled them, because I'm an old whiner, dish-rag! I'm too tender-hearted with them. But wait! I allow nobody to play tricks with me, the devil with 'em all! I'll stay here and not budge until she pays! Brr! How angry I am, how terribly angry I am! Every tendon is trembling with anger and I can hardly breathe! I'm even growing ill! (*He calls out*) Servant!

(*LUKA enters*)

LUKA What is it you wish?

SMIRNOV Bring me Kvas or water! (*LUKA goes out*) Well, what can we do? She hasn't it on hand? What sort of logic is that? A fellow stands with the knife at his throat, he needs money, he is on the point of hanging himself, and she won't pay because she isn't in the mood to discuss money matters. Woman's logic! That's why I never liked to talk to women and why I dislike doing it now. I would rather sit on a powder barrel than talk with a woman. Brr! —I'm getting cold as ice, this affair has made me so angry. I need only to see such a romantic creature from a distance to get so angry that I have cramps in the calves! It's enough to make one yell for help! (*Enter LUKA*)

LUKA (*hands him water*) Madam is ill and is not receiving.

SMIRNOV March! (*LUKA goes out*) Ill and isn't receiving! All right, it isn't necessary. I won't receive, either! I'll sit here and stay until you bring that money. If you're ill a week, I'll sit here a week. If you're ill a year, I'll sit here a year. As Heaven is my witness, I'll get the money. You don't disturb me with

your mourning—or with your dimples. We know these dimples! (*He calls out the window*) Simon, unharness! We aren't going to leave right away. I am going to stay here. Tell them in the stable to give the horses some oats. The left horse has twisted the bridle again. (*Imitating him*) Stop! I'll show you how. Stop! (*Leaves window*) It's awful. Unbearable heat, no money, didn't sleep last night and now—mourning-dresses with moods. My head aches, perhaps I ought to have a drink. Ye-s, I must have a drink. (*Calling*) Servant!

LUKA What do you wish?

SMIRNOV Something to drink! (*LUKA goes out*) SMIRNOV sits down and looks at his clothes. Ugh, a fine figure! No use denying that. Dust, dirty boots, unwashed, uncombed, straw on my vest—the lady probably took me for a highwayman. (*He yawns*) It was a little impolite to come into a reception room with such clothes. Oh, well, no harm done. I'm not here as a guest. I'm a creditor. And there is no special costume for creditors.

LUKA (*entering with glass*) You take great liberty, sir.

SMIRNOV (*angrily*) What?

LUKA I—I—I just—

SMIRNOV Whom are you talking to? Keep quiet.

LUKA (*angrily*) Nice mess! This fellow won't leave! (*He goes out*)

SMIRNOV Lord, how angry I am! Angry enough to throw mud at the whole world! I even feel ill! Servant!

(MRS POPOV comes in with down-cast eyes)

MRS POPOV Sir, in my solitude I have become unaccustomed to the human voice and I cannot stand the sound of loud talking I beg you, please to cease disturbing my rest

SMIRNOV Pay me my money and I'll leave

MRS POPOV I told you once, plainly, in your native tongue, that I haven't the money at hand, wait until day after tomorrow

SMIRNOV And I also had the honor of informing you in your native tongue that I need the money, not day after tomorrow, but today If you don't pay me today I shall have to hang myself tomorrow

MRS POPOV But what can I do if I haven't the money?

SMIRNOV So you are not going to pay immediately? You're not?

MRS POPOV I cannot

SMIRNOV Then I'll sit here until I get the money (*He sits down*) You will pay day after tomorrow? Excellent! Here I stay until day after tomorrow (*Jumps up*) I ask you, do I have to pay that interest tomorrow or not? Or do you think I'm joking?

MRS POPOV Sir, I beg of you, don't scream! This is not a stable

SMIRNOV I'm not talking about stables, I'm asking you whether I have to pay that interest tomorrow or not?

MRS POPOV You have no idea how to treat a lady

SMIRNOV Oh, yes, I have

MRS POPOV No, you have not You are an ill-bred, vulgar person! Respectable people don't speak so to ladies

SMIRNOV How remarkable! How do you want one to speak to you? In French, perhaps! Madame, je vous prie! Pardon me for having disturbed you What beautiful weather we are having today! And how this mourning becomes you! (*He makes a low bow with mock ceremony*)

MRS POPOV Not at all funny! I think it vulgar!

SMIRNOV (*imitating her*) Not at all funny—vulgar! I don't understand how to behave in the company of ladies Madam, in the course of my life I have seen more women than you have sparrows Three times have I fought duels for women, twelve I jilted and nine jilted me There was a time when I played the fool, used honeyed language, bowed and scraped I loved, suffered, sighed to the moon, melted in love's torments I loved passionately, I loved to madness, loved in every key, chattered like a magpie on emancipation, sacrificed half my fortune in the tender passion, until now the devil knows I've had enough of it Your obedient servant will let you lead him around by the nose no more Enough! Black eyes, passionate eyes, coral lips, dimples in cheeks, moonlight whispers, soft, modest sighs—for all that, madam, I wouldn't pay a kopeck! I am not speaking of present company, but of women in general, from the tinnest to the greatest, they are conceited, hypocritical, chattering, odious, deceitful from top to toe, vain,

petty, cruel with a maddening logic and (*he strikes his forehead*) in this respect, please excuse my frankness, but one sparrow is worth ten of the aforementioned petticoat-philosophers. When one sees one of the romantic creatures before him he imagines he is looking at some holy being, so wonderful that its one breath could dissolve him in a sea of a thousand charms and delights, but if one looks into the soul—it's nothing but a common crocodile (*He seizes the arm-chair and breaks it in two*). But the worst of all is that this crocodile imagines it is a masterpiece of creation, and that it has a monopoly on all the tender passions. May the devil hang me upside down if there is anything to love about a woman! When she is in love, all she knows is how to complain and shed tears. If the man suffers and makes sacrifices she swings her tram about and tries to lead him by the nose. You have the misfortune to be a woman, and naturally you know woman's nature, tell me on your honor, have you ever in your life seen a woman who was really true and faithful? Never! Only the old and the deformed are true and faithful. It's easier to find a cat with horns or a white woodcock, than a faithful woman.

MRS POPOV But allow me to ask, who is true and faithful in love? The man, perhaps?

SMIRNOV Yes, indeed! The man!

MRS POPOV The man! (*She laughs sarcastically*) The man true and faithful in love! Well, that is something new! (*Bitterly*) How can you make such a statement? Men true and faithful! So long as we have gone thus far, I may as well say that

of all the men I have known, my husband was the best, I loved him passionately with all my soul, as only a young, sensible woman may love, I gave him my youth, my happiness, my fortune, my life. I worshipped him like a heathen. And what happened? This best of men betrayed me in every possible way. After his death I found his desk filled with love-letters. While he was alive he left me alone for months—it is horrible even to think about it—he made love to other women in my very presence, he wasted my money and made fun of my feelings—and in spite of everything, I trusted him and was true to him. And more than that he is dead and I am still true to him. I have buried myself within these four walls and I shall wear this mourning to my grave.

SMIRNOV (*laughing disrespectfully*) Mourning! What on earth do you take me for? As if I didn't know why you wore this black domino and why you buried yourself within these four walls. Such a secret! So romantic! Some knight will pass the castle, gaze up at the windows and think to himself "Here dwells the mysterious Tamara who, for love of her husband, has buried herself within four walls." Oh, I understand the art!

MRS POPOV (*springing up*) What? What do you mean by saying such things to me?

SMIRNOV You have buried yourself alive, but meanwhile you have not forgotten to powder your nose!

MRS POPOV. How dare you speak so?

SMIRNOV Don't scream at me, please, I'm not the manager Allow me to call things by their right names I am not a woman, and I am accustomed to speak out what I think So please don't scream

MRS POPOV I'm not screaming It is you who are screaming Please leave me, I beg of you

SMIRNOV Pay me my money and I'll leave

MRS POPOV I won't give you the money

SMIRNOV You won't? You won't give me my money?

MRS POPOV I don't care what you do You won't get a kopeck! Leave me!

SMIRNOV As I haven't the pleasure of being either your husband or your fiancé please don't make a scene (*He sits down*) I can't stand it

MRS POPOV (*breathing hard*) You are going to sit down?

SMIRNOV I already have

MRS POPOV Kindly leave the house!

SMIRNOV Give me the money

MRS POPOV I don't care to speak with impudent men Leave! (*Pause*) You aren't going?

SMIRNOV No

MRS POPOV No?

SMIRNOV. No.

MRS POPOV Very well (*She rings the bell*)
(*Enter LUKA*)

MRS POPOV Luka, show the gentleman out

LUKA (*going to SMIRNOV*) Sir, why don't you leave when you are ordered? What do you want?

SMIRNOV (*jumping up*) Whom do you think you are talking to? I'll grind you to powder

LUKA (*puts his hand to his heart*) Good Lord! (*He drops into a chair*) Oh, I'm ill, I can't breathe!

MRS POPOV Where is Dascha?
(*Calling*) Dascha! Pelageja! Dascha! (*She rings*)

LUKA They're all gone! I'm ill! Water!

MRS POPOV (*to SMIRNOV*) Leave! Get out!

SMIRNOV Kindly be a little more polite!

MRS POPOV (*striking her fists and stamping her feet*) You are vulgar! You're a boor! A monster!

SMIRNOV What did you say!

MRS POPOV I said you were a boor, a monster!

SMIRNOV (*steps toward her quickly*) Permit me to ask what right you have to insult me?

MRS POPOV What of it? Do you think I am afraid of you?

SMIRNOV And you think that because you are a romantic creature you can insult me without being punished? I challenge you!

LUKA Merciful heaven! Water!

SMIRNOV We'll have a duel

MRS POPOV Do you think because you have big fists and a steer's neck I am afraid of you?

SMIRNOV I allow no one to insult me, and I make no exception because you are a woman, one of the "weaker sex!"

MRS POPOV (*trying to cry him down*) Boor, boor, boor!

SMIRNOV It is high time to do away with the old superstition that it is only the man who is forced to give satisfaction. If there is equity at all let there be equity in all things. There's a limit!

MRS POPOV You wish to fight a duel? Very well

SMIRNOV Immediately

MRS POPOV Immediately My husband had pistols. I'll bring them (*She hurries away, then turns*) Oh, what a pleasure it will be to put a bullet in your impudent head! The devil take you! (*She goes out*)

SMIRNOV I'll shoot her down! I'm no fledgling, no sentimental young puppy. For me, there is no weaker sex!

LUKA Oh, sir! (*Falls to his knees*) Have mercy on me, an old man, and go away. You have frightened me to death already, and now you want to fight a duel.

SMIRNOV (*paying no attention*) A duel. That's equity, emancipation. That way the sexes are made equal. I'll shoot her down as a matter of principle. What can a person say to such a woman? (*Imitating her*) "The devil take you. I'll put a bullet in your impudent head." What can one say to that? She was angry, her eyes blazed, she accepted the challenge. On my honor, it's the first time in my life that I ever saw such a woman.

LUKA Oh, sir. Go away. Go away!

SMIRNOV That is a woman. I can understand her. A real woman. No shilly-shallying, but fire, powder, and noise! It would be a pity to shoot a woman like that.

LUKA (*weeping*) Oh, sir, go away (*Enter MRS POPOV*)

MRS POPOV Here are the pistols. But before we have our duel please show me how to shoot. I have never had a pistol in my hand before!

LUKA God be merciful and have pity upon us! I'll go and get the gardener and the coachman. Why has this horror come to us? (*He goes out*)

SMIRNOV (*looking at the pistols*) You see, there are different kinds. There are special duelling pistols with cap and ball. But these are revolvers, Smith & Wesson, with ejectors, fine pistols! A pair like that cost at least ninety rubles. This is the way to hold a revolver (*Aside*) Those eyes, those eyes! A real woman!

MRS POPOV Like this?

SMIRNOV Yes, that way Then you pull the hammer back—so—then you aim—put your head back a little Just stretch your arm out, please So—then press your finger on the thing like that, and that is all The chief thing is this don't get excited, don't hurry your aim, and take care that your hand doesn't tremble

MRS POPOV It isn't well to shoot inside, let's go into the garden

SMIRNOV Yes I'll tell you now, I am going to shoot into the air

MRS POPOV That is too much! Why?

SMIRNOV Because—because That's my business

MRS POPOV You are afraid Yes A-h-h-h No, no, my dear sir, no flinching! Please follow me I won't rest until I've made a hole in that head I hate so much Are you afraid?

SMIRNOV Yes, I'm afraid

MRS POPOV You are lying Why won't you fight?

SMIRNOV Because—because—I—like you

MRS POPOV (*with an angry laugh*) You like me! He dares to say he likes me! (*She points to the door*) Go

SMIRNOV (*laying the revolver silently on the table, takes his hat and starts At the door he stops a moment gazing at her silently, then he approaches her, hesitating*) Listen! Are you still angry? I was mad as the devil, but please understand me—how can I express myself? The

thing is like this—such things are—(*He raises his voice*) Now, is it my fault that you owe me money? (*Grasps the back of the chair, which breaks*) The devil knows what breakable furniture you have! I like you! Do you understand? I—I'm almost in love!

MRS POPOV Leave! I hate you

SMIRNOV Lord! What a woman! I never in my life met one like her I'm lost, ruined! I've been caught like a mouse in a trap

MRS POPOV Go, or I'll shoot

SMIRNOV Shoot! You have no idea what happiness it would be to die in sight of those beautiful eyes, to die from the revolver in this little velvet hand! I'm mad! Consider it and decide immediately, for if I go now, we shall never see each other again Decide—speak—I am a noble, a respectable man, have an income of ten thousand, can shoot a coin thrown into the air I own some fine horses Will you be my wife?

MRS POPOV (*swings the revolver angrily*) I'll shoot!

SMIRNOV My mind is not clear—I can't understand Servant—water! I have fallen in love like any young man (*He takes her hand and she cries with pain*) I love you! (*He kneels*) I love you as I have never loved before Twelve women I jilted, nine jilted me, but not one of them all have I loved as I love you I am conquered, lost, I lie at your feet like a fool and beg for your hand Shame and disgrace! For five years I haven't been in love, I thanked the Lord for it, and now I am caught, like a carriage tongue in another carriage I

beg for your hand! Yes, or no? Will you?—Good! (*He gets up and goes quickly to the door*)

MRS POPOV Wait a moment!

SMIRNOV (*stopping*) Well?

MRS POPOV Nothing You may go But—wait a moment No, go on, go on I hate you Or—no don't go Oh, if you knew how angry I was, how angry! (*She throws the revolver onto the chair*) My finger is swollen from this thing (*She angrily tears her handkerchief*) What are you standing there for? Get out!

SMIRNOV Farewell!

MRS POPOV Yes, go (*Cries out*) Why are you going? Wait—no, go! Oh, how angry I am! Don't come too near, don't come too near—er—come—no nearer

SMIRNOV (*approaching her*) How angry I am with myself! Fall in love like a school-boy, throw myself on my knees I've got a chill! (*Strongly*) I love you This is fine—all I needed was to fall in love Tomorrow I have to pay my interest, the hay harvest has begun, and then you appear! (*He takes her in his arms*) I can never forgive myself

MRS POPOV Go away! Take your hands off me! I hate you—you—this is— (*A long kiss*) (*Enter LUKA with an ax, the gardener with a rake, the coachman with a pitch-fork, and workmen with poles*)

LUKA (*staring at the pair*) Merciful Heavens! (*A long pause*)

MRS POPOV (*dropping her eyes*) Tell them in the stable that Toby isn't to have any oats

CURTAIN

The Twelve-Pound Look

BY JAMES M BARRIE

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 WEST 45TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

THE TWELVE-POUND LOOK

If quite convenient (as they say about cheques) you are to conceive that the scene is laid in your own house, and that HARRY SIMS is you. Perhaps the ornamentation of the house is a trifle ostentatious, but if you cavil at that we are willing to re-decorate: you don't get out of being HARRY SIMS on a mere matter of plush and dados. It pleases us to make him a city man, but (rather than lose you) he can be turned with a scrape of the pen into a K C, fashionable doctor, Secretary of State, or what you will. We conceive him of a pleasant rotundity with a thick red neck, but we shall waive that point if you know him to be thin.

It is that day in your career when everything went wrong just when everything seemed to be superlatively right.

In HARRY'S case it was a woman who did the mischief. She came to him in his great hour and told him she did not admire him. Of course he turned her out of the house and was soon himself again, but it spoilt the morning for him. This is the subject of the play, and quite enough too.

HARRY is to receive the honor of knighthood in a few days, and we discover him in the sumptuous "snuggery" of his home in Kensington (or is it Westminster?), rehearsing the ceremony with his wife. They have been at it all the morning, a pleasing occupation. MRS SIMS (as we may call her for the last time, as it were, and strictly as a good-natured joke) is wearing her presentation gown, and personates the august one who is about to dub her HARRY knight. She is seated regally. Her jewelled shoulders proclaim aloud her husband's generosity. She must be an extraordinarily proud and happy woman, yet she has a drawn face and shrinking ways as if there were someone near her of whom she is afraid. She claps her hands, as the signal to HARRY. He enters bowing, and with a graceful swerve of the leg. He is only partly in costume, the sword and the real stockings not having arrived yet. With a gliding motion that is only delayed while one leg makes up on the other, he reaches his wife, and, going on one knee, raises her hand superbly to his lips. She taps him on the shoulder with a paper-knife and says huskily, "Rise, Sir Harry." He rises, bows, and glides about the room, going on his knees to various articles of furniture, and rises from each a knight. It is a radiant domestic scene, and HARRY is as dignified as if he knew that royalty was rehearsing it at the other end.

SIR HARRY (*complacently*) Did that seem all right, eh?

LADY SIMS (*much relieved*) I think perfect.

SIR HARRY But was it dignified?

LADY SIMS Oh, very. And it will be still more so when you have the sword.

SIR HARRY The sword will lend it an air. There are really the five moments—(*suiting the action to the word*)—the glide—the dip—the kiss—the tap—and you back out a knight. It's short, but it's a very beautiful ceremony. (*Kindly*) Anything you can suggest?

LADY SIMS No—oh no. (*Nervously, seeing him pause to kiss the tassel of*

a cushion) You don't think you have practised till you know what to do almost too well?

(He has been in a blissful temper, but such niggling criticism would try any man)

SIR HARRY I do not Don't talk nonsense Wait till your opinion is asked for

LADY SIMS *(abashed)* I'm sorry, Harry *(A perfect butler appears and presents a card)* "The Flora Type-Writing Agency"

SIR HARRY Ah, yes I telephoned them to send someone A woman, I suppose, Tombes?

TOMBES Yes, Sir Harry.

SIR HARRY Show her in here *(He has very lately become a stickler for etiquette)* And, Tombes, strictly speaking, you know, I am not Sir Harry till Thursday

TOMBES Beg pardon, sir, but it is such a satisfaction to us

SIR HARRY *(good-naturedly)* Ah, they like it downstairs, do they?

TOMBES *(unbending)* Especially the females, Sir Harry

SIR HARRY Exactly You can show her in, Tombes *(The butler departs on his mighty task)* You can tell the woman what she is wanted for, Emmy, while I change *(He is too modest to boast about himself, and prefers to keep a wife in the house for that purpose)* You can tell her the sort of things about me that will come better from you *(Smiling happily)* You heard what Tombes said, "Especially the females" And

he is right Success! The women like it even better than the men And rightly For they share You share, Lady Sims Not a woman will see that gown without being sick with envy of it I know them Have all our lady friends in to see it It will make them ill for a week

(These sentiments carry him off lightheartedly, and presently the disturbing element is shown in She is a mere typist, dressed in uncommonly good taste, but at contemptibly small expense, and she is carrying her typewriter in a friendly way rather than as a badge of slavery, as of course it is Her eye is clear, and in odd contrast to LADY SIMS, she is self-reliant and serene)

KATE *(respectfully, but she should have waited to be spoken to)* Good morning, madam

LADY SIMS *(in her nervous way, and scarcely noticing that the typist is a little too ready with her tongue)* Good morning *(As a first impression she rather likes the woman, and the woman, though it is scarcely worth mentioning, rather likes her)* LADY SIMS has a maid for buttoning and unbuttoning her, and probably another for waiting on the maid, and she gazes with a little envy perhaps at a woman who does things for herself) Is that the type-writing machine?

KATE *(who is getting it ready for use)* Yes *(not "Yes, madam," as it ought to be)* I suppose if I am to work here I may take this off I get on better without it *(She is referring to her hat)*

LADY SIMS Certainly *(But the hat is already off)* I ought to apologise for my gown I am to be presented

this week, and I was trying it on
(*Her tone is not really apologetic
She is rather clinging to the glory of
her gown, wistfully, as if not absolutely certain, you know, that it is a glory*)

KATE It is beautiful, if I may presume to say so (*She frankly admires it She probably has a best, and a second best of her own that sort of thing*)

LADY SIMS (*with a flush of pride in the gown*) Yes, it is very beautiful (*The beauty of it gives her courage*) Sit down, please

KATE (*the sort of woman who would have sat down in any case*) I suppose it is some copying you want done? I got no particulars I was told to come to this address, but that was all

LADY SIMS (*almost with the humility of a servant*) Oh, it is not work for me, it is for my husband, and what he needs is not exactly copying (*Swelling, for she is proud of HARRY*) He wants a number of letters answered—hundreds of them—letters and telegrams of congratulation

KATE (*as if it were all in the day's work*) Yes?

LADY SIMS (*remembering that HARRY expects every wife to do her duty*) My husband is a remarkable man He is about to be knighted (*Pause, but KATE does not fall to the floor*) He is to be knighted for his services to—(*on reflection*)—for his services (*She is conscious that she is not doing HARRY justice*) He can explain it so much better than I can

KATE (*in her business-like way*) And I am to answer the congratulations?

LADY SIMS (*afraid that it will be a hard task*) Yes

KATE (*blithely*) It is work I have had some experience of (*She proceeds to type*)

LADY SIMS But you can't begin till you know what he wants to say

KATE Only a specimen letter Won't it be the usual thing?

LADY SIMS (*to whom this is a new idea*) Is there a usual thing?

KATE Oh, yes (*She continues to type, and LADY SIMS, half-mesmerised, gazes at her numble fingers The useless woman watches the useful one, and she sighs, she could not tell why*)

LADY SIMS How quickly you do it! It must be delightful to be able to do something, and to do it well

KATE (*thankfully*) Yes, it is delightful

LADY SIMS (*again remembering the source of all her greatness*) But, excuse me, I don't think that will be any use My husband wants me to explain to you that his is an exceptional case He did not try to get this honor in any way It was a complete surprise to him——

KATE (*who is a practical Kate and no dealer in sarcasm*) That is what I have written

LADY SIMS (*in whom sarcasm would meet a dead wall*) But how could you know?

KATE I only guessed

LADY SIMS Is that the usual thing?

KATE Oh, yes

LADY SIMS They don't try to get it?

KATE I don't know That is what we are told to say in the letters (*To her at present the only important thing about the letters is that they are ten shillings the hundred*)

LADY SIMS (*returning to surer ground*) I should explain that my husband is not a man who cares for honors So long as he does his duty——

KATE Yes, I have been putting that in

LADY SIMS Have you? But he particularly wants it to be known that he would have declined a title were it not——

KATE I have got it here

LADY SIMS What have you got?

KATE (*reading*) "Indeed, I would have asked to be allowed to decline had it not been that I want to please my wife"

LADY SIMS (*heavily*) But how could you know it was that?

KATE Is it?

LADY SIMS (*who after all is the one with the right to ask questions*) Do they all accept it for that reason?

KATE That is what we are told to say in the letters

LADY SIMS (*thoughtlessly*) It is quite as if you knew my husband

KATE I assure you, I don't even know his name

LADY SIMS (*suddenly showing that she knows him*) Oh, he wouldn't like that!

(*And it is here that HARRY re-enters in his city garments, looking so gay, feeling so jolly that we bleed for him However, the annoying KATHERINE is to get a shock also*)

LADY SIMS This is the lady, Harry

SIR HARRY (*shooting his cuffs*) Yes, yes Good morning, my dear (*Then they see each other, and their mouths open, but not for words After the first surprise KATE seems to find some humor in the situation, but HARRY lowers like a thundercloud*)

LADY SIMS (*who has seen nothing*) I have been trying to explain to her——

SIR HARRY Eh—what? (*He controls himself*) Leave it to me, Emmy, I'll attend to her

(*LADY SIMS goes, with a dread fear that somehow she has vexed her lord, and then HARRY attends to the intruder*)

SIR HARRY (*with concentrated scorn*) You!

KATE (*as if agreeing with him*) Yes, it's funny

SIR HARRY The shamelessness of your daring to come here.

KATE Believe me, it is not less a surprise to me than it is to you I was sent here in the ordinary way of business I was given only the number of the house I was not told the name

SIR HARRY (*withering her*) The ordinary way of business! This is what you have fallen to—a typist!

KATE (*unwithered*) Think of it!

SIR HARRY After going through worse straits, I'll be bound

KATE (*with some grim memories*) Much worse straits

SIR HARRY (*alas, laughing coarsely*) My congratulations!

KATE Thank you, Harry

SIR HARRY (*who is annoyed, as any man would be, not to find her abject*) Eh? What was that you called me, madam?

KATE Isn't it Harry? On my soul, I almost forgot

SIR HARRY It isn't Harry to you My name is Sims, if you please.

KATE Yes, I had not forgotten that It was my name, too, you see

SIR HARRY (*in his best manner*) It was your name till you forfeited the right to bear it

KATE Exactly

SIR HARRY (*gloating*) I was furious to find you here, but on second thoughts it pleases me (*From the depths of his moral nature*) There is a grim justice in this

KATE (*sympathetically*) Tell me?

SIR HARRY Do you know what you were brought here to do?

KATE I have just been learning You have been made a knight, and I was summoned to answer the messages of congratulation

SIR HARRY That's it, that's it You come on this day as my servant!

KATE I, who might have been Lady Sims

SIR HARRY And you are her typist instead And she has four men-servants Oh, I am glad you saw her in her presentation gown

KATE I wonder if she would let me do her washing, Sir Harry?
(*Her want of taste disgusts him*)

SIR HARRY (*with dignity*) You can go The mere thought that only a few flights of stairs separates such as you from my innocent children——
(*He will never know why a new light has come into her face*)

KATE (*slowly*) You have children?

SIR HARRY (*inflated*) Two (*He wonders why she is so long in answering*)

KATE (*resorting to impertinence*) Such a nice number

SIR HARRY (*with an extra turn of the screw*) Both boys

KATE Successful in everything Are they like you, Sir Harry?

SIR HARRY (*expanding*) They are very like me

KATE That's nice (*Even on such a subject as this she can be ribald*) now that she has always been strange to him—smiles tolerantly)

SIR HARRY Will you please to go KATE You never found out?

KATE Heigho! What shall I say to my employer? SIR HARRY I could never be sure

SIR HARRY That is no affair of mine KATE (*reflectively*) I thought that would worry you

KATE What will you say to Lady Sims? SIR HARRY (*sneering*) It's plain that he soon left you

SIR HARRY I flatter myself that KATE Very soon

whatever I say, Lady Sims will accept without comment
(*She smiles, heaven knows why, unless her next remark explains it*)

KATE Still the same Harry

SIR HARRY What do you mean?

KATE Only that you have the old confidence in your profound knowledge of the sex
SIR HARRY (*beginning to think as little of her intellect as of her morals*) I suppose I know my wife

KATE (*hopelessly dense*) I suppose so I was only remembering that you used to think you knew her in the days when I was the lady (*He is merely wasting his time on her, and he indicates the door She is not sufficiently the lady to retire worsted*)
Well, good-bye, Sir Harry Won't you ring, and the four men-servants will show me out?
(*But he hesitates*)

KATE (*hopelessly dense*) I suppose so I was only remembering that you used to think you knew her in the days when I was the lady (*He is merely wasting his time on her, and he indicates the door She is not sufficiently the lady to retire worsted*)
Well, good-bye, Sir Harry Won't you ring, and the four men-servants will show me out?
(*But he hesitates*)

SIR HARRY (*in spite of himself*) As you are here, there is something I want to get out of you (*Wishing he could ask it less eagerly*) Tell me, who was the man?
(*The strange woman—it is evident*)

now that she has always been strange to him—smiles tolerantly)

KATE You never found out?

SIR HARRY I could never be sure

KATE (*reflectively*) I thought that would worry you

SIR HARRY (*sneering*) It's plain that he soon left you

KATE Very soon

SIR HARRY As I could have told you (*But still she surveys him with the smile of Mona Lisa The badgered man has to entreat*) Who was he? It was fourteen years ago, and cannot matter to any of us now Kate, tell me who he was?
(*It is his first youthful moment, and perhaps because of that she does not wish to hurt him*)

KATE (*shaking a motherly head*) Better not ask

SIR HARRY I do ask Tell me

KATE It is kinder not to tell you

SIR HARRY (*violently*) Then, by James, it was one of my own pals. Was it Bernard Roche? (*She shakes her head*) It may have been some one who comes to my house still

KATE I think not (*Reflecting*) Fourteen years! You found my letter that night when you went home?

SIR HARRY (*impatient*) Yes

KATE I propped it against the decanters I thought you would be sure to see it there It was a room not unlike this, and the furniture was arranged in the same attractive

way How it all comes back to me Don't you see me, Harry, in hat and cloak, putting the letter there, taking a last look round, and then stealing out into the night to meet——

SIR HARRY Whom?

KATE Him Hours pass, no sound in the room but the tick-tack of the clock, and then about midnight you return alone You take——

SIR HARRY (*gruffly*). I wasn't alone

KATE (*the picture spoilt*) No? oh (*Plaintively*) Here have I all these years been conceiving it wrongly. (*She studies his face*) I believe something interesting happened?

SIR HARRY (*growling*) Something confoundedly annoying

KATE (*coaxing*) Do tell me

SIR HARRY We won't go into that Who was the man? Surely a husband has a right to know with whom his wife bolted

KATE (*who is detestably ready with her tongue*) Surely the wife has a right to know how he took it (*The woman's love of bargaining comes to her aid*) A fair exchange You tell me what happened, and I will tell you who he was

SIR HARRY You will? Very well (*It is the first point on which they have agreed, and, forgetting himself, he takes a place beside her on the fire-seat He is thinking only of what he is to tell her, but she, womanlike, is conscious of their proximity*)

KATE (*tastelessly*) Quite like old times (*He moves away from her indignantly*) Go on, Harry.

SIR HARRY (*who has a manful shrinking from saying anything that is to his disadvantage*) Well, as you know, I was dining at the club that night

KATE Yes

SIR HARRY Jack Lamb drove me home Mabbett Green was with us, and I asked them to come in for a few minutes

KATE Jack Lamb, Mabbett Green? I think I remember them Jack was in Parliament

SIR HARRY No, that was Mabbett They came into the house with me and—(*with sudden horror*)—was it him?

KATE (*bewildered*) Who?

SIR HARRY. Mabbett?

KATE What?

SIR HARRY The man?

KATE What man? (*Understanding*) Oh no I thought you said he came into the house with you

SIR HARRY. It might have been a blind

KATE Well, it wasn't Go on

SIR HARRY. They came in to finish a talk we had been having at the club.

KATE An interesting talk, evidently.

SIR HARRY The papers had been full that evening of the elopement of some countess woman with a fidler What was her name?

KATE Does it matter?

SIR HARRY No (*Thus ends the countess*) We had been discussing the thing and—(*he pulls a wry face*)—and I had been rather warm——

KATE (*with horrid relish*) I began to see You had been saying it served the husband right, that the man who could not look after his wife deserved to lose her It was one of your favorite subjects Oh, Harry, say it was that!

SIR HARRY (*sourly*) It may have been something like that

KATE And all the time the letter was there, waiting, and none of you knew except the clock Harry, it is sweet of you to tell me (*His face is not sweet The illiterate woman has used the wrong adjective*) I forget what I said precisely in the letter

SIR HARRY (*pulverizing her*) So do I But I have it still

KATE (*not pulverized*) Do let me see it again (*She has observed his eye wandering to the desk*)

SIR HARRY You are welcome to it as a gift (*The fateful letter, a poor little dead thing, is brought to light from a locked drawer*)

KATE (*taking it*). Yes, this is it Harry, how you did crumple it! (*She reads, not without curiosity*) "Dear husband—I call you that for the last time—I am off I am what you call making a bolt of it I won't try to excuse myself nor to explain, for you would not accept the excuses nor understand the explanation It will be a little shock to you,

but only to your pride, what will astound you is that any woman could be such a fool as to leave such a man as you I am taking nothing with me that belongs to you May you be very happy—Your ungrateful KATE P S—You need not try to find out who he is You will try, but you won't succeed" (*She folds the nasty little thing up*) I may really have it for my very own?

SIR HARRY You really may

KATE (*impudently*) If you would care for a typed copy——?

SIR HARRY (*in a voice with which he used to frighten his grandmother*) None of your sauce! (*Wincing*) I had to let them see it in the end

KATE I can picture Jack Lamb eating it

SIR HARRY A penniless parson's daughter

KATE That is all I was

SIR HARRY We searched for the two of you high and low

KATE Private detectives?

SIR HARRY They couldn't get on the track of you

KATE (*smiling*) No?

SIR HARRY But at last the courts let me serve the papers by advertisement on a man unknown, and I got my freedom

KATE So I saw It was the last I heard of you

SIR HARRY (*each word a blow for*

her) And I married again just as soon as ever I could

SIR HARRY So who was he? Out with it

KATE They say that is always a compliment to the first wife

KATE You are determined to know?

SIR HARRY (*violently*) I showed them

SIR HARRY Your promise You gave your word

KATE You soon let them see that if one woman was a fool, you still had the pick of the basket to choose from

KATE If I must—— (*She is the villain of the piece, but it must be conceded that in this matter she is reluctant to pain him*) I am sorry I promised (*Looking at him steadily*) There was no one, Harry, no one at all

SIR HARRY By James, I did

KATE (*bringing him to earth again*) But still, you wondered who he was

SIR HARRY (*rising*) If you think you can play with me——

SIR HARRY I suspected everybody—even my pals I felt like jumping at their throats and crying, "It's you!"

KATE I told you that you wouldn't like it

KATE You had been so admirable to me, an instinct told you that I was sure to choose another of the same

SIR HARRY (*rasping*) It is unbearable

SIR HARRY I thought, it can't be money, so it must be looks Some dolly face (*He stares at her in perplexity*) He must have had something wonderful about him to make you willing to give up all that you had with me

KATE I suppose it is, but it is true

KATE (*as if he was the stupid one*) Poor Harry

SIR HARRY Your letter itself gives you the lie

SIR HARRY And it couldn't have been going on for long, for I would have noticed the change in you

KATE That was intentional I saw that if the truth were known you might have a difficulty in getting your freedom, and as I was getting mine it seemed fair that you should have yours also So I wrote my good-bye in words that would be taken to mean what you thought they meant, and I knew the law would back you in your opinion For the law, like you, Harry, has a profound understanding of women

KATE Would you?

SIR HARRY (*trying to straighten himself*) I don't believe you yet

SIR HARRY I knew you so well

KATE (*looking not unkindly into the soul of this man*) Perhaps that is the best way to take it It is less un-

KATE. You amazing man

flattering than the truth But you were the only one (*Summing up her life*) You sufficed

SIR HARRY Then what mad impulse——

KATE It was no impulse, Harry I had thought it out for a year

SIR HARRY A year? (*Dazed*) One would think to hear you that I hadn't been a good husband to you

KATE (*with a sad smile*) You were a good husband according to your lights

SIR HARRY (*stoutly*) I think so

KATE And a moral man, and chatty, and quite the philanthropist

SIR HARRY (*on sure ground*) All women envied you

KATE How you loved me to be envied

SIR HARRY I swaddled you in luxury

KATE (*making her great revelation*). That was it

SIR HARRY (*blankly*) What?

KATE (*who can be serene because it is all over*) How you beamed at me when I sat at the head of your fat dinners in my fat jewellery, surrounded by our fat friends

SIR HARRY (*aggrieved*). They weren't so fat

KATE (*a side issue*) All except those who were so thin Have you ever noticed, Harry, that many

jewels make women either incredibly fat or incredibly thin?

SIR HARRY (*shouting*) I have not (*Is it worth while to argue with her any longer?*) We had all the most interesting society of the day It wasn't only business men There were politicians, painters, writers——

KATE Only the glorious, dazzling successes Oh, the fat talk while we ate too much—about who had made a hit and who was slipping back, and what the noo house cost and the noo motor and the gold soup-plates, and who was to be the noo knight

SIR HARRY (*who it will be observed is unanswerable from first to last*) Was anybody getting on better than me, and consequently you?

KATE Consequently me! Oh, Harry, you and your sublime religion

SIR HARRY (*honest heart*) My religion? I never was one to talk about religion, but——

KATE Pooh, Harry, you don't even know what your religion was and is and will be till the day of your expensive funeral (*And here is the lesson that life has taught her*) One's religion is whatever he is most interested in, and yours is Success

SIR HARRY (*quoting from his morning paper*) Ambition—it is the last infirmity of noble minds

KATE Noble minds!

SIR HARRY (*at last grasping what she is talking about*) You are not saying that you left me because of my success?

KATE Yes, that was it (*And now she stands revealed to him*) I couldn't endure it If a failure had come now and then—but your success was suffocating me (*She is rigid with emotion*) The passionate craving I had to be done with it, to find myself among people who had not got on

SIR HARRY (*with proper spirit*) There are plenty of them

KATE There were none in our set When they began to go down-hill they rolled out of our sight

SIR HARRY (*clutching it*) I tell you I am worth a quarter of a million

KATE (*unabashed*) That is what you are worth to yourself I'll tell you what you are worth to me exactly twelve pounds For I made up my mind that I could launch myself on the world alone if I first proved my mettle by earning twelve pounds, and as soon as I had earned it I left you

SIR HARRY (*in the scales*). Twelve pounds!

KATE That is your value to a woman If she can't make it she has to stick to you

SIR HARRY (*remembering perhaps a rectory garden*) You valued me at more than that when you married me

KATE (*seeing it also*) Ah, I didn't know you then If only you had been a man, Harry

SIR HARRY A man? What do you mean by a man?

KATE (*leaving the garden*) Haven't you heard of them? They are something fine, and every woman is loathe to admit to herself that her husband is not one When she marries, even though she has been a very trivial person, there is in her some vague stirring toward a worthy life, as well as a fear of her capacity for evil She knows her chance lies in him If there is something good in him, what is good in her finds it, and they join forces against the baser parts So I didn't give you up willingly, Harry I invented all sorts of theories to explain you Your hardness—I said it was a fine want of maudishness Your coarseness—I said it goes with strength Your contempt for the weak—I called it virility Your want of ideals was clear-sightedness Your ignoble views of women—I tried to think them funny Oh, I clung to you to save myself But I had to let go, you had only the one quality, Harry, success, you had it so strong that it swallowed all the others

SIR HARRY (*not to be diverted from the main issue*) How did you earn that twelve pounds?

KATE It took me nearly six months, but I earned it fairly (*She presses her hand on the typewriter as lovingly as many a woman has pressed a rose*) I learned this I hired it and taught myself I got some work through a friend, and with my first twelve pounds I paid for my machine Then I considered that I was free to go, and I went

SIR HARRY All this going on in my house while you were living in the lap of luxury! (*She nods*) By God you were determined

KATE (*briefly*) By God, I was

SIR HARRY (*staring*) How you must have hated me

KATE (*smiling at the childish word*) Not a bit—after I saw that there was a way out From that hour you amused me, Harry, I was even sorry for you, for I saw that you couldn't help yourself Success is just a fatal gift

SIR HARRY Oh, thank you

KATE (*thinking, dear friends in front, of you and me perhaps*) Yes, and some of your most successful friends knew it One or two of them used to look very sad at times, as if they thought they might have come to something if they hadn't got on

SIR HARRY (*who has a horror of sacrifice*) The battered crew you live among now—what are they but folk who have tried to succeed and failed?

KATE That's it, they try, but they fail

SIR HARRY And always will fail

KATE Always Poor souls—I say of them Poor soul—they say of me It keeps us human That is why I never tire of them

SIR HARRY (*comprehensively*) Bah! Kate, I tell you I'll be worth half a million yet

KATE I'm sure you will You're getting stout, Harry

SIR HARRY No, I'm not

KATE What was the name of that fat old fellow who used to fall asleep at our dinner-parties?

SIR HARRY If you mean Sir William Crackley—

KATE That was the man Sir William was to me a perfect picture of the grand success He had got on so well that he was very, very stout, and when he sat on a chair it was thus (*her hands meeting in front of her*)—as if he were holding his success together That is what you are working for, Harry You will have that and the half million about the same time

SIR HARRY (*who has surely been very patient*) Will you please to leave my house

KATE (*putting on her gloves, soiled things*) But don't let us part in anger How do you think I am looking, Harry, compared to the dull, inert thing that used to roll round in your padded carriages?

SIR HARRY (*in masterly fashion*) I forget what you were like I'm very sure you never could have held a candle to the present Lady Sims

KATE That is a picture of her, is it not?

SIR HARRY (*seizing his chance again*) In her wedding-gown Painted by an R A

KATE (*wickedly*) A knight?

SIR HARRY (*deceived*) Yes

KATE (*who likes LADY SIMS a piece of presumption on her part*) It is a very pretty face

SIR HARRY (*with the pride of possession*) Acknowledged to be a beauty everywhere

KATE There is a merry look in the eyes, and character in the chin

SIR HARRY (*like an auctioneer*) Noted for her wit

KATE All her life before her when that was painted It is a *spirituelle* face too (*Suddenly she turns on him with anger, for the first and only time in the play*) Oh, Harry, you brute!

SIR HARRY (*staggered*) Eh? What?

KATE That dear creature capable of becoming a noble wife and mother—she is the spiritless woman of no account that I saw here a few minutes ago I forgive you for myself, for I escaped, but that poor lost soul, oh, Harry, Harry

SIR HARRY (*waving her to the door*) I'll thank you—If ever there was a woman proud of her husband and happy in her married life, that woman is Lady Sims

KATE I wonder

SIR HARRY Then you needn't wonder

KATE (*slowly*) If I was a husband—it is my advice to all of them—I would often watch my wife quietly to see whether the twelve-pound look was not coming into her eyes Two boys, did you say, and both like you?

SIR HARRY What is that to you?

KATE (*with glistering eyes*) I was

only thinking that somewhere there are two little girls who, when they grow up—the dear, pretty girls who are all meant for the men that don't get on! Well, good-bye, Sir Harry

SIR HARRY (*showing a little human weakness, it is to be feared*) Say first that you're sorry

KATE For what?

SIR HARRY That you left me Say you regret it bitterly You know you do (*She smiles and shakes her head. He is pettish. He makes a terrible announcement*) You have spoilt the day for me

KATE (*to hearten him*) I am sorry for that, but it is only a pin-prick, Harry I suppose it is a little jarring in the moment of your triumph to find that there is—one old friend—who does not think you a success, but you will soon forget it Who cares what a typist thinks?

SIR HARRY (*heartened*) Nobody A typist at eighteen shillings a week!

KATE (*proudly*) Not a bit of it, Harry I double that

SIR HARRY (*neatly*) Magnificent! (*There is a timid knock at the door*)

LADY SIMS May I come in?

SIR HARRY (*rather appealingly*). It is Lady Sims

KATE I won't tell She is afraid to come into her husband's room with out knocking!

SIR HARRY She is not (*Uxoriously*) Come in, dearest

(Dearest enters carrying the sword She might have had the sense not to bring it in while this annoying person is here)

LADY SIMS *(thinking she has brought her welcome with her)* Harry, the sword has come

SIR HARRY *(who will dote on it presently)* Oh, all right

LADY SIMS But I thought you were so eager to practice with it
(The person smiles at this He wishes he had not looked to see if she was smiling)

SIR HARRY *(sharply)* Put it down
(LADY SIMS flushes a little as she lays the sword aside)

KATE *(with her confounded courtesy)* It is a beautiful sword, if I may say so

LADY SIMS *(helped)* Yes
(The person thinks she can put him in the wrong, does she? He'll show her)

SIR HARRY *(with one eye on KATE)* Emmy, the one thing your neck needs is more jewels

LADY SIMS *(faltering)* More!

SIR HARRY Some ropes of pearls I'll see to it It's a bagatelle to me
(KATE conceals her chagrin, so she had better be shown the door He rings) I won't detain you any longer, MISS

KATE Thank you

LADY SIMS Going already? You have been very quick

SIR HARRY The person doesn't suit, Emmy

LADY SIMS I'm sorry

KATE So am I, madam, but it can't be helped Good-bye, your ladyship—good-bye, Sir Harry *(There is a suspicion of an impertinent curtsy, and she is escorted off the premises by TOMBES The air of the room is purified by her going)* SIR HARRY notices it at once)

LADY SIMS *(whose tendency is to say the wrong thing)* She seemed such a capable woman

SIR HARRY *(on his hearth)* I don't like her style at all

LADY SIMS *(meekly)* Of course you know best *(This is the right kind of woman)*

SIR HARRY *(rather anxious for corroboration)* Lord, how she winced when I said I was to give you those ropes of pearls

LADY SIMS Did she? I didn't notice I suppose so

SIR HARRY *(frowning)* Suppose? Surely I know enough about women to know that

LADY SIMS Yes, oh yes

SIR HARRY *(odd that so confident a man should ask this)* Emmy, I know you well, don't I? I can read you like a book, eh?

LADY SIMS *(nervously)* Yes, Harry

SIR HARRY *(jovially, but with an inquiring eye)* What a different existence yours is from that poor lonely wretch's.

LADY SIMS Yes, but she has a very busy, Emmy (*He sits at his writing-table*)
contented face

SIR HARRY (*with a stamp of his foot*) All put on What?
LADY SIMS (*dutifully*) I'm sorry I'll go, Harry (*Inconsequentially*)
Are they very expensive?

LADY SIMS (*timidly*) I didn't say anything
SIR HARRY What?

SIR HARRY (*snapping*) One would think you envied her
LADY SIMS Envied? Oh no—but I thought she looked so alive It was while she was working the machine
LADY SIMS Those machines?
(*When she has gone the possible meaning of her question startles him The curtain hides him from us, but we may be sure that he will soon be bland again We have a comfortable feeling, you and I, that there is nothing of* HARRY SIMS *in us*)
SIR HARRY Alive! That's no life It is you that are alive (*Curtly*) I'm

The Green Cockatoo

A GROTESQUE IN ONE ACT

BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY ETHEL VAN DER VEER

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CHARACTERS

EMILE, *Duc de Cadignan*

FRANCOIS, *Viscount de Noeant*

ALBIN, *Chevalier de la Tremouille*

MARQUIS DE LANSAC

SÉVERINE, *his wife*

ROLLIN, *a poet*

PROSPÈRE, *host of "The Green Cockatoo," formerly manager of a theatre*

HENRI

BALTHASAR

GUILLAUME

SCAEVOLA

JULES

ÉTIENNE

MAURICE

GEORGETTE

MICHETTE

FLIPOTTE

} *Prospère's troupe*

LÉOCADIE, *an actress, Henri's wife*

GRASSET, *a philosopher*

LEBRÊT, *a tailor*

GRAIN, *a tramp*

A SERGENT DE VILLE

ARISTOCRATS, ACTORS and ACTRESSES, and CITIZENS

*The action occurs in Paris on the 14th of July, 1789, in the tap-room of
"The Green Cockatoo"*

THE GREEN COCKATOO

SCENE—*The tap-room of The Green Cockatoo. A not large cellar-room. Up right, a flight of seven steps, closed off at the top by a door, leads to the street. There is a second door up left, which is hardly visible. Almost the entire floor space is occupied by plain wooden tables surrounded by chairs. Left, is a kind of service bar, behind which are a number of casks, with spigots for drawing off wine. The room is lighted by oil lamps which hang from the ceiling. The proprietor, PROSPÈRE, is on the scene.*

(Enter GRASSET)

GRASSET (*on the steps*) In here, Lebrêt I know this place. My old friend the proprietor will have a barrel of wine hidden somewhere, even though the whole of Paris is dry.

(LEBRÊT comes in)

PROSPÈRE Good evening, Grasset. I'm glad you've shown up at last. Gone sour on Philosophy? Looking for another engagement with me?

GRASSET To be sure. But for the moment I am the guest and you are the host. So bring us some wine.

PROSPÈRE Wine? Now where should I get wine, Grasset? Last night they emptied all the wine-shops in Paris. And I'll wager you were mixed up in it, too.

GRASSET Bring on the wine. Because the mob will follow us in an hour (*Listening*). Do you hear anything, Lebrêt?

LEBRÊT A rumble—like soft thunder.

GRASSET Good—citizens of Paris (*To PROSPÈRE*) You have plenty for the mob. Bring some for us. My friend and admirer the Citi-

zen Lebrêt, tailor of the Rue St Honoré, will pay for everything.

LEBRÊT Yes, certainly I'll pay (*PROSPÈRE hesitates*)

GRASSET Show him you have some money, Lebrêt.

(LEBRÊT displays his purse)

PROSPÈRE Well, I'll see if I— (*He fills two glasses from a spigot*) Where do you come from, Grasset? From the Palais Royal?

GRASSET But yes, I just made a speech there. My friend, I'm in the running now. Can you imagine after whom I spoke?

PROSPÈRE Well?

GRASSET After Camille Desmoulins! Yes, I actually took the risk. And tell me, Lebrêt, who received the greater applause, Desmoulins or I?

LEBRÊT You did—undoubtedly.

GRASSET And how did I do?

LEBRÊT Splendidly.

GRASSET You hear that, Prospère? I climbed on the table. I looked as impressive as a monument and thousands—five thousand, ten

thousand, surrounded me—just as they did Camille Desmoulins and how they applauded me!

LEBRÊT It was a big demonstration

GRASSET And a very loud one But they have heeded my words and have gone to the Bastille And I promise you that before the night is over it will fall

PROSPÈRE If your speech could crumble the walls—

GRASSET My speech indeed! Are you deaf? They are making an end of it Our brave soldiers are with us They will use their God-given courage on that damn prison You know that behind those walls their fathers and brothers are confined But they wouldn't have shot—if we hadn't talked My dear Prospère, the power of the spirit is invincible (To LEBRÊT) Where are the papers?

LEBRÊT (*producing them*) Here

GRASSET Here are the latest pamphlets, which are now being distributed in the Palais Royal Here is one from my friend Cerutti RECORDS FOR THE PEOPLE OF PARIS Here is one from Desmoulins, without doubt a better orator than a writer FRANCE FREED

PROSPÈRE When is your own pamphlet going to appear, the one you are always talking about?

GRASSET We don't need any more The time has come for deeds The man who sits at home these days is a coward The real men are on the streets

PROSPÈRE Bravo! Bravo!

GRASSET In Toulon they killed the Mayor In Brignolles they have plundered a hundred houses Only the Parisians have been sluggards and allowed themselves to remain passive

PROSPÈRE That can no longer be said

LEBRÊT (*who has been drinking steadily*) Rise, comrades! On to freedom!

GRASSET Right! Close up your shop, Prospère, and come along with us

PROSPÈRE I'll come freely, when the time is ripe

GRASSET Of course—when the danger is over

PROSPÈRE My dear friend, I love freedom as much as you do But first I have my business to think about

GRASSET From now on there is only one business for the citizens of Paris, to set your brothers free

PROSPÈRE That's all very well for those who have nothing else to do

LEBRÊT What does he say? He is making fun of us!

PROSPÈRE That never would occur to me But get along now My performance is about to begin And I can't use you in that

LEBRÊT What kind of a performance? Is this a theater?

PROSPÈRE Certainly it's a theater Your friend here played with us for a fortnight

LEBRÊT You played here, Grasset?
And do you let this fellow poke fun
at you without punishing him for it?

GRASSET Keep quiet it's true
I have played here But this is not a
wineshop it's a criminal ren-
dezvous Come along

PROSPÈRE But first you'll have to
pay

LEBRÊT If it's true that this is a
criminal's hang-out, I'll not pay you
a sou

PROSPÈRE (to GRASSET) Explain to
your friend the kind of place he is
in

GRASSET It's a remarkable place
People come here who play at being
criminals, and also others who really
are criminals and don't know it

LEBRÊT So—?

GRASSET I should like to call your
attention to the fact that what I just
said was exceedingly witty It could
have been made the hit of an entire
speech

LEBRÊT I fail to understand you

GRASSET I have told you that Pros-
père was once my manager He now
directs his comedies in a quite origi-
nal manner My old colleagues sit
around here and act as if they were
criminals Do you understand?
They tell hair-raising tales of lives
they never lived, of crimes they
never committed And the pub-
lic that haunts this place feels the
agreeable thrill of contact with the
most dangerous characters of Paris
—with thieves and crooks and mur-
derers—and—

LEBRÊT What kind of a public?

PROSPÈRE The aristocrats of Paris

GRASSET Nobility

PROSPÈRE The Gentlemen of the
Court—

LEBRÊT Down with them!

GRASSET This is the very thing for
them A sauce for their sated pal-
ates, a thrill for their blasé nerves It
was here my own aims began, Le-
brêt Here I made my first speech—
in the manner of a jest And
here is where I first began to hate
the aristos, with their beautiful
clothes, their perfumes and full
stomachs And I am very glad,
my good Lebrêt, to have you see the
place where the greatness of your
friend first began to take shape
(In another tone) Say, Prospère,
suppose this whole affair were to go
up in smoke

PROSPÈRE Which affair?

GRASSET My great political career
. . . Would you reengage me?

PROSPÈRE Not for the world

GRASSET (lightly) Why not? Isn't
there possibly a chance for anyone
besides your Henri?

PROSPÈRE Perhaps, but in your case
—I have always feared you would
some day forget yourself and do an
injury to one of my paying guests.
You might sometime, under the ex-
citement of the moment, let your-
self go

GRASSET (flattered). Well, that
would be possible

PROSPÈRE Yes I have to use great restraint, myself .

GRASSET Truly, Prospère, I could admire your self-control—if I didn't know that you were a coward

PROSPÈRE Ah, my friend, I am satisfied with the opportunities afforded by my profession. It gives me much gratification to tell those people exactly what I think of them, straight to their faces. I bawl them out to my heart's content, while they regard it as a joke. It is an art to find an outlet for one's rancor. *(He draws a dagger and allows the lights to play upon it)*

LEBRÊT Citizen Prospère, what does that mean?

GRASSET Have no fear. I bet you that dagger isn't even sharpened.

PROSPÈRE You might lose, my friend. Some day it may be that a joke will turn out to be deadly serious. And for that time I am prepared.

GRASSET That day is near. We are living in great times. Come, Citizen Lebrêt, we must join our comrades. *(To PROSPÈRE)* Good-bye. You'll see me come back as a great man—or—never.

LEBRÊT *(at the steps)* As a great man or never
(They go out. PROSPÈRE sits on a table, opens a pamphlet and begins to read aloud.)

PROSPÈRE "Now the beast is in the noose—strangle it!" Hmm—he doesn't write badly, this little Desmoulins. "Never has richer booty been offered for the taking. Forty

thousand palaces and castles, two fifths of all the wealth of France, will be the reward of valor. The ones who believe themselves in power will be overthrown. The nation will be born anew."
(A SERGENT DE VILLE enters.)

PROSPÈRE *(looking him over)* Hmm—the rabble appears early to-night.

SERGENT Spare me your wit, my dear Prospère. I am now the officer of your district.

PROSPÈRE And what can I do for you?

SERGENT I am ordered to attend your performance this evening.

PROSPÈRE I am much honored.

SERGENT That is not the intention. The authorities wish to know exactly what occurs here. During the last few weeks—

PROSPÈRE This is a place of amusement, Mr. Sergeant, nothing more.

SERGENT Let me continue. For some weeks this place has been the scene of vile orgies.

PROSPÈRE You've been misinformed, Mr. Officer. We just have a little fun, and that's all there is to it.

SERGENT It may begin so, but my information goes further. You were once an actor?

PROSPÈRE Director. Manager of an admirable company which last played in St. Denis.

SERGENT That's immaterial. You came into a small inheritance?

PROSPÈRE But not worth mentioning

SERGEANT Your troupe was dispersed?

PROSPÈRE Also the inheritance

SERGEANT Good So you opened this wine-room

PROSPÈRE It paid very little

SERGEANT And then you got hold of an idea—which I must say was rather original

PROSPÈRE You make me very proud, Mr Sergeant

SERGEANT No matter You collected your troupe of actors and let them give a performance which I'm told is peculiar—and even questionable

PROSPÈRE Questionable? If it were, I could not hold my audiences—the finest audiences in Paris The Viscomte de Nogeant is my daily guest The Marquis de Lansac comes frequently, and the Duc de Cadignan, Mr Sergeant, is a warm admirer of my leading actor, the celebrated Henri Baston

SERGEANT And he also admires the art—or the arts—of your actresses?

PROSPÈRE Were you to see my little actresses, you couldn't blame any one for admiring them

SERGEANT Enough It is reported that the amusement offered by your—what shall I say—?

PROSPÈRE The word "artists" would do

SERGEANT I shall use the word "huelings" The amusement offered by your huelings goes far beyond what is permissible We are told that you people make speeches here that are—what does my report say? (*He reads from a notebook*) "that are not only immoral—which would bother us very little—"but also seditious and inciting"—and in times like these—the State cannot wink at them

PROSPÈRE Mr Officer, I answer these accusations only by a most polite invitation to attend the performance You will then see for yourself that nothing seditious goes on here Also that my audience is not one which would be susceptible to sedition We give a theatrical performance, and that is all

SERGEANT Naturally I cannot accept your invitation, as I must remain here in my official capacity

PROSPÈRE I believe I can give you excellent entertainment, Mr Sergeant But you'll permit the advice that you remove your insignia and appear in civilian clothes? The presence of a police-officer, were it known to them, would make my actors self-conscious, and the mood of my audience would also suffer

SERGEANT You are quite right I will disappear for a while and return as a young man of fashion

PROSPÈRE Which should be easy for you, Mr Officer But even as a vagabond you would not attract attention Only as an officer of the law

SERGEANT Good-bye—for the moment

PROSPÈRE (*bows ironically after him*) When the blessed day arrives, when I see you and your like—

(*GRAIN comes in He is a tramp, ragged and dirty, and looks alarmed at seeing a policeman The SERGEANT DE VILLE looks him over, then smiles*)

SERGEANT (*to PROSPÈRE*) One of your artists arriving? (*Goes out*)

GRAIN (*whiningly, pathetically*) Good evening

PROSPÈRE (*after a long scrutiny*) If you are one of my players, then I certainly must compliment you, for I don't recognize you

GRAIN What do you mean?

PROSPÈRE Stop your fooling and take off your wig I want to know who you are (*He tugs at GRAIN's hair*)

GRAIN Ouch!

PROSPÈRE By thunder it's real hair who the devil are you? You seem to be a genuine tramp

GRAIN But yes

PROSPÈRE What do you want, then?

GRAIN I have the honor of speaking to the landlord of The Green Cockatoo?

PROSPÈRE I am he

GRAIN My name is Gram sometimes Carniche some call me Whining Brimstone But I was in prison under the name of Gram, so that's the most real to me

PROSPÈRE Ah—I understand You wish me to engage you, so you at once begin to enact your part Very good Continue

GRAIN Citizen Prospère, please don't take me for a swindler I am a man of honor When I tell you that I have been in prison, that's the plain truth

(*PROSPÈRE regards him sceptically*)

GRAIN (*taking a paper from his pocket*) Look at this, Citizen Prospère It will show you that I was released yesterday afternoon at four o'clock

PROSPÈRE (*looking at the paper*) After two years of imprisonment by thunder, this is genuine

GRAIN Were you still in doubt?

PROSPÈRE What did you do, that they locked you up for two years?

GRAIN They would have hanged me, but happily I was still half a child when I murdered my poor aunt

PROSPÈRE Man alive! How could any one murder his aunt?

GRAIN Citizen Prospère, I wouldn't have done it if my aunt had not been false to me, and with my best friend

PROSPÈRE Your aunt?

GRAIN Yes We were more to each other than is usual between aunts and nephews Our family relationships were peculiar I was embittered, highly embittered Shall I tell you about it?

PROSPÈRE Go right ahead Tell me

the rest, and perhaps we can come to an agreement

GRAIN My sister was no more than half a child when she ran away from home Could you guess with whom?

PROSPÈRE I've no idea

GRAIN With her uncle Then he left her in the lurch—with a child

PROSPÈRE With a whole child—I hope?

GRAIN It is indecate of you, Citizen Prospère, to make light of such matters

PROSPÈRE Let me tell you something, you Whining Brimstone Your family affairs bore me Do you think I'm here to listen to every chance ragamuffin's story of his murders? What is it to me? I take it you want something—

GRAIN Yes indeed, Citizen Prospère I've come to ask you for work

PROSPÈRE (*loftily*) Let me call your attention to the fact that this is a pleasure resort There are no aunts to be murdered here

GRAIN Oh, one was enough for me I wish to become an upright man I was sent to you

PROSPÈRE By whom?

GRAIN A most kindly young man who shared my cell with me for the last three days Now he is there alone His name is Gaston, and you know him

PROSPÈRE Gaston! Now I know why he hasn't shown up for three nights

He is one of my best men for the pickpocket act Such stories as he can tell—they bring down the house

GRAIN Yes, yes But now they have caught him

PROSPÈRE How could they catch him, when he has never really stolen?

GRAIN But he has Though it must have been for the first time, for he was incredibly clumsy Imagine—(*Lamentingly*) on the Boulevard des Capucines—he simply ripped open a lady's pocket and pulled out her purse A rank amateur You've inspired me with confidence, so I'll confess to you that there was a time when I also was up to little tricks like that But never without my dear father It was in my childhood days, and we all lived together, and my poor aunt was still alive—

PROSPÈRE What are you lamenting? I think it very poor taste Didn't you kill her yourself?

GRAIN Too late But the reason I came to ask you to take me on—I'll be just the opposite to Gaston He first played the thief and then became one While I—

PROSPÈRE You look the part I'll try you out Then, at a given moment, you simply tell the whole story about your aunt Just as it was Some one will lead the way with a question

GRAIN I thank you, Citizen Prospère And about my salary—

PROSPÈRE Tonight you'll be playing on trial For that I cannot pay

But you'll get plenty to eat and plenty to drink, and I'll hand you a couple of francs for your night's lodging

GRAIN I thank you And you'll introduce me to your company as a visitor from the provinces?

PROSPÈRE Oh no I shall tell them at once that you are a real murderer They will be delighted

GRAIN Excuse me—of course I want to put my best foot forward—but I don't exactly understand—

PROSPÈRE You'll understand better after you've worked with them a little while
(SCAEVOLA and JULES enter)

SCAEVOLA Good evening, director!

PROSPÈRE Host, if you please How often must I tell you that if you address me as director, the whole show will be ruined

SCAEVOLA Whatever you say But I don't believe we will play tonight

PROSPÈRE Why not?

SCAEVOLA The people won't be in the mood There is a terrific racket going on in the streets, and the mob in front of the Bastille is screaming with frenzy

PROSPÈRE What is that to us? For two months the noise has been going on, and our audience has never failed us They enjoy themselves as always

SCAEVOLA Yes Like the gaiety of people who are about to be hanged

PROSPÈRE Oh, that I may live to see it!

SCAEVOLA Meanwhile, give us something to drink, to put us in the right mood I haven't been in the right mood all day

PROSPÈRE That is frequently the case, my friend I want to tell you that you were not very satisfactory last evening

SCAEVOLA In what way, may I ask?

PROSPÈRE Your story of the burglary was utter piffle

SCAEVOLA Piffle!

PROSPÈRE Precisely It was absolutely unconvincing Ranting alone is insufficient

SCAEVOLA I never rant!

PROSPÈRE You always do I'll have to rehearse these things with you I can't depend on your inspiration, as I do with Henri—

SCAEVOLA Henri! Always Henri! Henri is nothing but a stage-hand compared with me My burglary was a masterpiece Henri couldn't equal it in a lifetime If I am not satisfactory to you, my friend, I'll go to a regular theater This place is only a blot, a smear (*He sees GRAIN*) Ah! Who is this? Not one of us Have you already engaged a new performer, Prospère? What sort of a make-up does he think that is?

PROSPÈRE Don't get uneasy, he's not a professional actor, but a real murderer

SCAEVOLA Indeed! (*Goes to GRAIN*)
 Delighted to make your acquaint-
 ance My name is Scaevola

GRAIN I am called Grain
 (*JULES has all the while been walk-
 ing back and forth in the tap-room,
 occasionally halting, like a man
 greatly disturbed in mind*)

PROSPÈRE What's the matter with
 you, Jules?

JULES I am rehearsing

PROSPÈRE As what?

JULES A conscience-stricken soul
 Tonight you will see me as a man
 writhing under the pangs of con-
 science Look at me—look at my
 furrowed brow Isn't it effective?
 Don't I look as if the furies of hell
 were after me? . . . (*He paces
 back and forth*)

SCAEVOLA (*yells*) Wine! Wine here!

PROSPÈRE Keep quiet! The audi-
 ence is not yet here
 (*HENRI and LÉOCADIE enter*)

HENRI Good evening! (*With a light
 gesture of greeting*) Good evening,
 gentlemen

PROSPÈRE Good evening, Henri!
 What's this I see? You have Léo-
 cadie with you?

GRAIN (*who has been looking at
 LÉOCADIE, to SCAEVOLA*) I know
 her (*He goes on talking with
 SCAEVOLA*)

LÉOCADIE Yes, my dear Prospère, it
 is I

PROSPÈRE Why, I haven't seen you

for a year Let me greet you (*Makes
 to kiss her*)

HENRI Here! Cut that out! (*His
 eyes rest on LÉOCADIE with pride,
 wistfulness, and a certain anxiety*)

PROSPÈRE But Henri when
 we're such old friends and
 your former manager, Léocadie!

LÉOCADIE Ah, those were the days,
 Prospère!

PROSPÈRE Why sigh about it—
 when you've made your way so well
 since? To be sure, a beautiful young
 woman always has it easier than—

HENRI (*sharply*) Cut that out!

PROSPÈRE Why do you flare up like
 that—when she's come here with
 you?

HENRI Be still! . . . Since yester-
 day she has been my wife

PROSPÈRE Your wife! . . . (*To
 LÉOCADIE*) Is this a joke?

LÉOCADIE No, he has really married
 me

PROSPÈRE Congratulations!
 Here, Scaevola, Jules Henri is
 married

SCAEVOLA (*going to them*) My best
 wishes
 (*JULES shakes hands with her*)

GRAIN (*to PROSPÈRE*) How strange!
 I saw this woman just a few
 minutes after I was set free

PROSPÈRE How was that?

GRAIN She was the first beautiful

woman I had seen in two years I was greatly thrilled But there was another gentleman with her— (*He goes on conversing with PROSPÈRE*)

HENRI (*in an ecstatic, high-pitched tone, which must not be declamatory*) Léocadie, my beloved, my wife! All that has been is now forgotten In a moment like this, the past exists no more (*SCAEVOLA and JULES have dropped back PROSPÈRE comes forward*)

PROSPÈRE What moment?

HENRI We have been united by the Holy Sacrament That is stronger than human vows Now God is watching over us, we have forgotten all that went before A new day has dawned Léocadie, everything between us is holy Our kisses—once so passionate—from this day are sanctified Léocadie, my beloved wife (*He regards her glowingly*) Does she not look different, Prospère? Unlike when you knew her? Is her brow not purer, more serene? All that was is now no more Is that not so, Léocadie?

LÉOCADIE Of course, Henri

HENRI And all is well Tomorrow we leave Paris Léocadie is playing tonight for the last time at the Porte St Martin And for the last time, also, I play here with you

PROSPÈRE Have you gone crazy, Henri? You can't think of leaving me And surely the manager of the Porte St Martin won't let Léocadie go She is his greatest attraction The young men, they say, go in streams to see her

HENRI Be still! Léocadie is going

with me, and will never leave me (*Brutally*) Tell them that you'll never leave me, Léocadie

LÉOCADIE I will never leave you

HENRI If you did, I should— (*Pause*) I'm weary of this life I want rest—and rest I will have

PROSPÈRE But what will you do with yourself, Henri? It's ridiculous I'll make you a proposition Withdraw Léocadie from the Porte St Martin—but let her come here with me I can use an actress of talent

HENRI My mind is made up, Prospère My decision is made We leave the city We go to the country

PROSPÈRE To the country? Where?

HENRI To my old father, who lives alone in his poor village I haven't seen him for seven years He must have given up all hope of seeing his lost son He'll receive us joyfully

PROSPÈRE And how are you going to support yourself and Léocadie? All over the land the people are dying of starvation They are a thousand times worse off than we in the city And don't think for a moment that you are the kind of man to labor in the fields

HENRI You'll find out that I am

PROSPÈRE There's hardly any wheat growing anywhere in France You are going into certain misery

HENRI We are going into unimaginable happiness, Prospère Isn't that so, Léocadie? Often we have dreamt about it I look forward to the peace of the wide horizons Yes,

PROSPÈRE, in my dreams I see myself with her, walking over lush fields, in the stillness of eventide, the starry heavens above We are escaping from this terrible and dangerous city, and great peace will enfold us Isn't that so, Léocadie? Have we not often dreamt of it?

LÉOCADIE Yes, we have often dreamt about it

PROSPÈRE Listen to me, Henri You must think this over well I will gladly increase your salary And I will pay Léocadie the same as I pay you

LÉOCADIE Do you hear that, Henri?

PROSPÈRE I really can't imagine who would take your place here No one has such clever ideas as you No one has ever been so loved by our audiences Don't go—

HENRI I realize of course, that no one could take my place

PROSPÈRE Stay with us, Henri (*A glance at LÉOCADIE informs him that she is in accord with him*)

HENRI The parting will be more painful for you than for me, I promise you The regrets will all be yours For tonight I have prepared the most dramatic of scenes, something that will cause everybody to shudder There will be a presage—ment of the end of their world for the end of their world is near at hand We will hear of it from afar, Léocadie They will tell us of it many days after it has occurred But tonight you will all say only Henri has never played so well before

PROSPÈRE What are you going to play? Do you know, Léocadie?

LÉOCADIE Oh, I never know anything

HENRI Does any one realize the genius that is mine?

PROSPÈRE We do, every one of us That's why I insist it would be a sin to bury yourself in the country—with talents such as yours

HENRI I crave rest and serenity You cannot understand that, Prospère You've never loved—

PROSPÈRE Oh—?

HENRI As I love! I feel that I must be alone with her Léocadie, only in that way can we forget, and thus find peace And never before will two people have been so happy We shall have babies You'll make a good mother, Léocadie, and a splendid wife Everything unlovely will have vanished (*A long pause*)

LÉOCADIE It's growing late I'm due at the theater Good-bye, Prospère I'm delighted to have seen your famous place, where Henri has achieved so many triumphs

PROSPÈRE And why have you never come before?

LÉOCADIE Henri was not willing—on account of the young men with whom I should have to sit

HENRI (*who has drawn near to SCAEVOLA*) Give me a swallow of that, Scaevola

PROSPÈRE (*in a low tone, to LÉOCADIE*) A perfect fool, thus Henri If always you were only sitting with them—

LÉOCADIE I won't let you speak to me so

SCAEVOLA What an insufferable braggart!

PROSPÈRE Have a care, you little canaille— Some day he'll kill you

PROSPÈRE (*as the guests appear*) Good evening, you swine (*ALBIN draws back*)

LÉOCADIE What's the matter with you?

FRANCOIS (*ignoring it*) Wasn't that the little Léocadie of the Porte St Martin who just left with Henri?

PROSPÈRE Only yesterday you were seen with one of your fellows—

PROSPÈRE Surely it was And I suppose that if she took the trouble, she could make you remember that you're something of a man?

LÉOCADIE That was no fellow, you dumbhead, that was—

HENRI (*turning to them suddenly*) What's going on here? No monkey-business, please And no more secrets She's my wife

FRANCOIS (*laughing*) Possibly It seems we have arrived rather early

PROSPÈRE What did you give her as a wedding present?

PROSPÈRE Meantime you can amuse yourself with your country-bumpkin (*ALBIN rises*)

LÉOCADIE Oh, Henri doesn't think about things like that

FRANCOIS Let him alone I've told you of the sort of thing that goes on here (*To PROSPÈRE*) Good host, fetch us some wine

HENRI Well, you'll have it this very evening

PROSPÈRE I will But the time will come when you will be thankful to have water from the Seine

LÉOCADIE What will it be?

SCAEVOLA and JULES (*simultaneously*) What are you going to give her?

FRANCOIS Of course, of course But today I want wine, and of the best (*PROSPÈRE goes to the service-bar*)

HENRI (*very seriously, to LÉOCADIE*) After you shall have finished your scene at the Porte St Martin, I shall allow you to come here and see me act (*The OTHERS laugh*) Never did a bride receive a more practical gift Come, Léocadie So long, Prospère, I will return shortly

ALBIN What a dreadful person!

(*HENRI and LÉOCADIE go out FRANCOIS, the VICOMTE DE NOGEANT and ALBIN, CHEVALIER DE LA TREMOUILLE enter*)

FRANCOIS You should bear in mind that it's all a joke But there are other places where you might hear similar things spoken in earnest

ALBIN Is it not frowned upon?

FRANCOIS (*laughs*) It's clear that you are fresh from the provinces.

ALBIN Down our way things are almost as bad, nowadays The peasants are becoming very insolent But what is to be done about it?

FRANCOIS What do you expect The poor devils are hungry, and that's the whole trouble

ALBIN How can I help it? How can my great uncle help it?

FRANCOIS Why do you mention your great uncle?

ALBIN In our village they held a meeting—quite openly—where they actually called my great uncle, the Comte de la Tremouille, a grain-usurer

FRANCOIS Is that all!

ALBIN Well, I should think—

FRANCOIS Tomorrow we will go to the Palais Royal There you'll hear the monstrous speeches made by the mob But we let them talk, it is better so They are good fellows at heart, and that is the safest vent for their feelings

ALBIN (*indicating SCAEVOLA and JULES*) What suspicious characters! Look how they are staring at us (*He feels for his rapier*)

FRANCOIS Don't make yourself ridiculous (*To the OTHERS*) You needn't begin yet The performance may wait until more of an audience has arrived (*To ALBIN*) They are the nicest people in the world, these actors I warrant you have often sat at table with many worse knaves

ALBIN But they were better dressed (*PROSPÈRE brings the wine MICHETTE and FLIPOTTE enter*)

FRANCOIS Bless you, my little pigeons, come over here and sit down

MICHETTE Come along, Flipotte She is still so shy

FLIPOTTE Good evening, young gentlemen

ALBIN Good evening, ladies

MICHETTE He's a nice little dear (*Sits on ALBIN's lap*)

ALBIN Please tell me, Francois, are these respectable women?

MICHETTE What is he saying?

FRANCOIS That is not quite the word The ladies who come here good heavens, Albin, but you are dense

PROSPÈRE What shall I bring for the duchesses?

MICHETTE Sweet wine for me

FRANCOIS (*indicating FLIPOTTE*) A friend of yours?

MICHETTE We live together We have only one bed between us

FLIPOTTE (*blushing*) Would you mind that, when you come to see her? (*Sits on FRANCOIS's lap*)

ALBIN I wouldn't exactly call her shy—

SCAEVOLA (*rises, comes threateningly to the table To MICHETTE*) So I've found you at last! (*To ALBIN*) And you, you miserable seducer—she is mine (*PROSPÈRE is looking on*)

FRANCOIS (*to ALBIN*) It's only a joke DUC (*laughingly*) You've chosen a good time

ALBIN She isn't his—

ALBIN What do you mean?

MICHETTE Go away I shall sit where I like
{SCAEVOLA *stands with clenched fists* }

MICHETTE He still has that delicious perfume No other man in Paris smells so sweet

PROSPÈRE (*behind*) Easy there

DUC She's comparing me with the seven or eight hundred other mer she knows as well as she does me

SCAEVOLA Ha, ha!

PROSPÈRE Ha, ha! (*To SCAEVOLA, privately*) You haven't a sou's worth of talent Roaring—that's all you do

FLIPOTTE May I play with your sword? (*She draws his sword from its sheath and holds it so that it reflects the light*)

MICHETTE (*to FRANCOIS*) He used to do it much better

GRAIN (*to PROSPÈRE*) That's the man—the man I saw her with— (*He talks further to PROSPÈRE, who seems astomshed*)

SCAEVOLA (*to PROSPÈRE*) I'm not in the right mood yet I'll do better when there are more people present You see, Prospère, I need an audience
(*The DUC DE CADIGNAN comes in*)

DUC Henri not here yet? (*To ALBIN*) If you see Henri, you will not regret having come

DUC Already in full swing?
(*MICHETTE and FLIPOTTE go up to him*)

PROSPÈRE (*to the DUC*) So you've turned up agam, have you? I'm glad, because we won't have that pleasure much longer

MICHETTE My sweet duke

DUC Why not? I find it very pleasant here

FRANCOIS Good evening, Emile (*Introducing*) My young friend Albin, Chevalier de la Tremouille—the Duc de Cadignan

PROSPÈRE I believe that But it's quite likely that you'll be one of the first to go

DUC I am charmed to meet you (*To the girls, who are hanging on to him*) Let go of me, children (*To ALBIN*) You've come to have a look at this queer wine-room?

ALBIN What does that mean?

ALBIN It quite bewilders me

PROSPÈRE You understand me well enough The most fortunate will become the most unfortunate (*Returns to the service-bar*)

FRANCOIS (*explaining*) The Chevalier has but recently come to Paris

DUC If I were the king I would make him my court jester

ALBIN What did he mean by saying you were too fortunate?

village paraded around the Mayor's house, carrying a coffin

DUC He means, Chevalier—

FLIPOTTE Carrying a coffin! Oh, I wouldn't carry a coffin for anything

ALBIN Oh please don't call me Chevalier Everybody calls me Albin simply Albin, because I look so young

FRANCOIS Be still! Nobody wishes you to carry a coffin (*To the duc*) Well?

DUC (*smiling*) Very good But then you must call me Emile

DUC Some of the women entered the house and told the Mayor that it was necessary he should die, but that they would give him the honor of being buried

ALBIN With your permission, Emile

DUC They have a sinister wit, these folk

FRANCOIS And did they really kill him?

FRANCOIS Why sinister? To me, it's very reassuring So long as the populace remains in jesting mood, nothing serious can happen

DUC No, or at least my brother did not say so

DUC Their jests have a curious twist Only today I learned of something that gives food for thought

FRANCOIS You see! Blusters, show-offs, clowns, nothing worse Today they are shrieking at the Bastille for a change—though they have done so half a dozen times before

FRANCOIS Tell us

FLIPOTTE and MICHETTE Yes, tell us, sweet Duke

DUC Well, if I were king I would have put a stop to it—long ago

DUC Do you know Lalange?

ALBIN Is it true that the king is so kind and tolerant?

FRANCOIS The village? Surely The Marquis de Montferrat has one of his finest game preserves there

DUC Have you not yet been presented to His Majesty?

DUC Quite so My brother is visiting him at his castle and has just written me of the affair In Lalange they have a mayor who is very unpopular

FRANCOIS The Chevalier is in Paris for the first time

DUC Yes, you are unbelievably young May I ask your age?

FRANCOIS Can you name one that isn't?

ALBIN It's only that I look young, I'm already seventeen

DUC Now listen The women of the

DUC Seventeen! How much is still before you I have reached twenty

four and I begin already to regret how much of my youth I have squandered

FRANCOIS That is delicious, Duke—coming from you, who count that day as lost in which you have not won a woman or killed a man

DUC The pity is, one never wins the right woman, and always kills the wrong man And so is youth wasted—just as Rollin says—

FRANCOIS What does Rollin say?

DUC I was thinking of his new piece they are giving at the Comédie—of that pretty simile—do you recall it?

FRANCOIS I have no memory for verse

DUC Nor I, alas I remember only the sense He says that youth which is not enjoyed is like a feather ball left lying in the sand, instead of being tossed in the air

ALBIN (*sagely*) Quite true

DUC Is it not? The feathers gradually lose their color and fall out Far better that it should drop into a bush, where it cannot be seen

ALBIN What should I understand by that, Emile?

DUC It's more a matter of feeling Could I only repeat the verse, you'd understand at once

ALBIN I believe you could write verse, Emile, if you tried

DUC What makes you think that?

ALBIN Since you came in, all life has seemed to flame up

DUC (*with a smile*) Yes? Is life flaming up for you?

(*Meanwhile two more noblemen have entered and taken a distant table, where PROSPÈRE seems to be doing his best to insult them*)

FRANCOIS (*to the DUC*) Won't you sit down with us?

DUC I can't stop now I will return later

MICHETTE Stay with us

FLIPOTTE Take me with you (*They try to hold him*)

PROSPÈRE (*joining them*) Leave him alone You are not nearly bad enough to suit him He's going out now to meet some trollop of the streets

DUC (*ignoring him*) I can't stay now, but will surely be back in time to see Henri

FRANCOIS When we came in, Henri was just leaving with Léocadie

DUC He has married her Did you know that?

FRANCOIS Married, eh! What will the others say to that?

ALBIN What others?

FRANCOIS She is a general favorite, you know

DUC And he wants to take her away from Paris, or so I've been told

PROSPÈRE (*meaningly*) So you've been told?

DUC It's very foolish Léocadie was created to be a great courtesan

FRANCOIS As every one knows

duc And could anything be more unreasonable than to take people away from their true vocation? (FRANCOIS *laughs*) I'm not jesting Like poets and conquerors, good courtézans are born, not made

FRANCOIS That is paradoxical

duc I'm sorry for her—and for Henri He should stay here—no, not here I would put him in the Comédie—though there also, no one would appreciate him as I do But then, I often have that feeling concerning artists If I were not the Duc de Cadignan, I should love to be an actor, a conqueror—

FRANCOIS Like Alexander the Great

duc (*smiling*) Like Henri—or Alexander (*To FLIPOTTE*) Give me my sword (*He returns it to its scabbard Slowly*) It is the choicest way to make sport of the world He who can portray whatever he pleases is greater than the rest of us (*As ALBIN regards him with astonishment*) Don't pay any attention to what I've said It's true only at the moment Good-bye

MICHETTE Give me a kiss before you go

FLIPOTTE Me, too (*They cling to him The duc kisses them both at once and takes his leave*)

ALBIN A wonderful man

FRANCOIS Surely—in his way But the fact that such men exist offers sufficient reason not to marry

ALBIN But who are these women?

FRANCOIS Actresses—members of Prospère's troupe—

(GUILLAUME *rushes in breathlessly, goes to the table where the actors are sitting and theatrically puts his hand to his heart, apparently scarcely able to stand*)

GUILLAUME Saved! I'm saved!

SCAEVOLA What's happened? What ails you?

ALBIN What's the matter with the man?

FRANCOIS That's only play-acting Now watch

ALBIN Ah—!

MICHETTE and FLIPOTTE (*running to GUILLAUME*) What is it? What's the matter?

SCAEVOLA Have a swallow—

GUILLAUME More! More wine, Prospère! My tongue cleaves to my mouth I've been running They were at my heels!

JULES (*starts*) Hush! They're ever at our heels!

PROSPÈRE Come, tell us what happened (*Coaching the actors*) More movement—livelier, there!

GUILLAUME Women here—where are the women? Ah—! (*An arm about FLIPOTTE*) that gives me new life (*To ALBIN, who is highly impressed*) The devil take me, my boy, if I thought I should ever see you again (*Listening*) They are coming! They are coming! (*Runs to the steps*) No, it's nothing—they—

ALBIN How strange! There really is a noise outside, as if throngs were hurrying past Is that just part of the stage-effects?

SCAEVOLA (*to JULES*) He does that trick every time Silly realism

PROSPÈRE Now tell us why they are after you

GUILLAUME Nothing special—but if they get me—it will cost me my head I set fire to a house—
(*During this scene, two more young noblemen drift in and sit at tables*)

PROSPÈRE (*coaching GUILLAUME*) Go on—go on!

GUILLAUME Go on? Isn't setting fire to a house sufficient?

FRANCOIS You haven't told us why you set fire to the house

GUILLAUME Because the president of the Supreme Court lives in it We chose him first—to show Parisian house-holders the danger of harboring tenants who have the power to send us poor devils to jail

GRAIN Good, that's very good

GUILLAUME (*looks at GRAIN in surprise*) All such houses must be burned Three more men like me, and there won't be a judge left in Paris

GRAIN Death to the judges!

JULES Yes but there is perhaps one judge whom we cannot do away with

GUILLAUME Who is that?

JULES The Judge that dwells within us

PROSPÈRE That stuff is vapid Come, Scaevola, roar! Now is the moment

SCAEVOLA Bring wine, Prospère, that we may drink to the death of all the judges of France
(*During the last words, the MARQUIS DE LANSAC, with his wife, SÉVERINE, and ROLLIN, the poet, have come in*)

SCAEVOLA Down with all those now in power! Down with them!

MARQUIS You see, Séverine, this is the way they greet us

ROLLIN Marquis, I warn you

SÉVERINE But why?

FRANCOIS Upon my word—the Marquise allow me to kiss your hand Good evening, Marquis God bless you, Rollin Do you venture here, Marquise?

SÉVERINE I've heard so much about this place And besides, this is a day of adventure—isn't it, Rollin?

MARQUIS Where do you suppose we've been? Yes, Vicomte, we've been to the Bastile

FRANCOIS Is the hullabaloo still going on there?

SÉVERINE It looks as if they meant to storm the place

ROLLIN (*declaims*)

*It is like a river that washes away
its own banks,
Like a flood that beats against the
shore*

*In wrath that its own child, the
earth,
Should dare resist its might*

SÉVERINE (to FRANÇOIS) We drove quite close and watched it from our carriage. It was very spectacular. Great crowds are so magnificent.

FRANÇOIS Yes, if only they didn't smell so vilely.

MARQUIS And then my wife insisted that we bring her here.

SÉVERINE What is there so remarkable about this place?

PROSPÈRE (to the MARQUIS) So you're here, too, you dried-up old scoundrel! Did you bring your wife because you didn't think it safe to leave her alone at home?

MARQUISE (forcing a smile) He is at least original.

PROSPÈRE Be careful you don't lose her here. These fine ladies often get an urge to find out what a real rogue is like.

ROLLIN I suffer unspeakably, Séverine.

MARQUIS Dear child, I warned you—but there's still time to go.

SÉVERINE What is troubling you? I think it quite charming. Let us sit down.

FRANÇOIS Permit me, Marquise, to present the Chevalier de la Tremouille, also here for the first time. Marquis de Lansac, Rollin, our distinguished poet.
(*They exchange compliments and sit down.*)

ALBIN (in an undertone to FRANÇOIS) Is she one of the players? It's a little confusing.

FRANÇOIS Shake up your wits, Albin. That is the real wife of the Marquis—a lady of rank.

ROLLIN (to SÉVERINE) Tell me that you love me.

SÉVERINE Yes, yes, but don't ask me every few minutes.

MARQUIS Have we missed anything?

FRANÇOIS Nothing much. That fellow over there is playing an incendiary.

SÉVERINE Chevalier, are you not the cousin of the little Lydia de la Tremouille who was married today?

ALBIN Yes, Marquise. That was one of my reasons for coming to Paris.

SÉVERINE I recall now, having seen you at the church.

ALBIN (self-consciously) I am flattered, Marquise.

SÉVERINE (to ROLLIN) What a nice boy.

ROLLIN Ah, Séverine, you never yet met a man you thought unpleasing.

SÉVERINE Oh yes—but I married him at once.

ROLLIN Yet I have a constant fear, Séverine, that there are moments when it is not safe for you to be with him.

PROSPÈRE (bringing wine) Here's

you wine I wish it were poison, but at present I am not allowed to give you that

FRANCOIS That time will soon come, Prospère

SÉVERINE (*to ROLLIN*) What's the matter with those two pretty girls, that they haven't come to our table? Now that I'm here, I want to be in everything that's going on. Thus far it has been offensively dull.

MARQUIS Just have a little patience, Séverine

SÉVERINE I think that nowadays the streets are more diverting (*To FRANCOIS*) Did you hear what happened to us yesterday when we went for a drive down the Promenade de Longchamps?

MARQUIS I beg of you, my dear Séverine .

SÉVERINE One fellow jumped on the step of our carriage and shouted in our faces. Next year you will walk behind your coach, while we shall be riding in it.

FRANCOIS That's rather strong.

MARQUIS I think it indiscreet to mention these things. Paris is a little feverish—but that will soon pass.

GUILLAUME (*suddenly*) I see flames—everywhere flames—whichever way I look—red, leaping flames.

PROSPÈRE (*in low-voiced protest*) You're playing a madman, not a criminal.

SÉVERINE He sees flames?

PROSPÈRE This is only a prelude, Madame la Marquise.

ALBIN I can't tell you how bewildered I feel.

MICHETTE (*goes to the MARQUIS*) I haven't greeted you yet, my sweet old pig.

MARQUIS (*embarrassed*) She is just being playful, dear Séverine.

SÉVERINE I doubt it. Tell me, little one, how many love affairs have you had so far?

MARQUIS (*to FRANCOIS*) It's remarkable how my wife enters into the mood of this place.

ROLLIN Quite.

MICHETTE (*to the MARQUISE*) Could you count yours?

MARQUISE When I was your age but yes, certainly.

ALBIN (*to ROLLIN*) Tell me, Monsieur Rollin, is the Marquise just acting—or is she really—? I can't make it out.

ROLLIN Reality acting can you always define the difference, Chevalier?

ALBIN Why, I think so.

ROLLIN I can't. And what I think so fascinating about this place, is that all apparent differences seem to be eliminated. Reality blends into illusion—illusion into actuality. Just look at the Marquise now, chatting with those creatures as if she were one of them. Yet she is—

ALBIN Something entirely different

ROLLIN I thank you, Chevalier

PROSPÈRE (to GRAIN) How did it happen?

GRAIN What?

PROSPÈRE The story of your aunt, for whom you spent two years in the penitentiary

GRAIN I told you, I strangled her

FRANCOIS This fellow is weak He must be an amateur I've never seen him before

(GEORGETTE comes in hastily, dressed as a prostitute of the lowest grade)

GEORGETTE Good evening, friends! Is my Balthasar here?

SCAEVOLA Georgette, come and sit with me Your Balthasar will show up soon He will have settled his affair

GEORGETTE If he is not here within ten minutes, he won't come

FRANCOIS Watch her, Marquise She is the real wife of this Balthasar who is about to come in She represents a common street-walker, while Balthasar is her bully But she's actually the most faithful wife in Paris (BALTHASAR arrives GEORGETTE runs to him with an embrace)

GEORGETTE My Balthasar! (Smiling she puts her arms about him)

BALTHASAR The matter is attended to (The OTHERS listen) It was not worth the trouble—I felt almost sorry for him You should size up your customers better, Georgette I

am sick of killing promising young men for the sake of a few francs

FRANCOIS Fine!

ALBIN What—?

FRANCOIS He gets his points over (The SERGENT DE VILLE returns in disguise, sits at a table)

PROSPÈRE (to the SERGENT) You arrive at an excellent time, Monsieur le Sergent This is one of my cleverest performers

BALTHASAR I'm going to look for another kind of a job I'm not without courage, but on my soul, this is a hazardous way of earning a living

SCAEVOLA I believe you

GEORGETTE (to BALTHASAR) There's something else on your mind

BALTHASAR I'll tell you, Georgette You are a little too nice to the young gentlemen

GEORGETTE (to the OTHERS) You see how childish he is? I have to be nice to them, to inspire confidence

ROLLIN Her words are profoundly true

BALTHASAR (to GEORGETTE) If I thought you had any feeling—

GEORGETTE His silly jealousy will land him in his grave

BALTHASAR I heard a sigh, Georgette, at a moment when there already was plenty of confidence

GEORGETTE Of course, you can't stop pretending all of a sudden

BALTHASAR Beware, Georgette—the Seine is deep (*Wildly*) You are deceiving me—

GEORGETTE Never! I swear it!

ALBIN I don't understand this at all

SÉVERINE (*to ROLLIN*) She has the right idea

ROLLIN You think so?

MARQUISE We can still go, Séverine

SÉVERINE But why? I am beginning to enjoy it

GEORGETTE (*her arms about him*) My Balthasar, I adore you

FRANCOIS Bravo! Bravo!

BALTHASAR What imbecile is that?

SERGEANT This is going too far it is
(*MAURICE and ETIENNE appear, dressed as noblemen, but the shabbiness of their costumes is not observed*)

THE PLAYERS Who are they?

SCAEVOLA Devil take me if it isn't Maurice and Etienne

GEORGETTE As I live, it is

BALTHASAR Georgette!

SÉVERINE What handsome young men!

ROLLIN It is painful, Séverine, that every handsome face excites you so

SÉVERINE What do you think I came here for?

ROLLIN At least you might tell me that you love me

SÉVERINE (*with a look*) You have a short memory

ETIENNE Where do you suppose we've been today?

FRANCOIS Pay attention, Marquis, these youths are very clever

MAURICE We've come from a wedding

ETIENNE You have to dress for that Otherwise the confounded secret police are after you

SCAEVOLA Did you make a good haul?

PROSPÈRE Let's see

MAURICE (*taking several watches from his pocket*) What am I offered for these?

PROSPÈRE For that one, a gold louis

MAURICE You would

SCAEVOLA I'd pay more It's worth more to me

MICHETTE That's a woman's watch Give it to me, Maurice

MAURICE What do you offer me for it?

MICHETTE You may look at me

MAURICE My dear child, that is not enough

SÉVERINE (*in a low voice*) I'll swear this is not just acting

ROLLIN There is an undercurrent—that's what makes it so fascinating—bits of the real flashing through

SCAEVOLA What wedding was it?

MAURICE That of Mademoiselle de la Tremouille She married the Comte de Bonville

ALBIN You hear that, Francois? I assure you they are real thieves

FRANCOIS Don't worry, Albin, I know this pair I've seen them play a dozen times They make a specialty of being pickpockets
(MAURICE *extracts some purses from his coat*)

SCAEVOLA You've done well by yourselves Why not do well by us?

ETIENNE It was a brilliant wedding The entire nobility of France was there Even the king was represented

ALBIN (*excited*) That is all true!

MAURICE (*throws gold pieces about upon the actor's table*) That's for you, my friends, to show our loyalty

FRANCOIS Stage money, my dear Albin (*He rises and picks up a few coins*) We can have some of it

PROSPÈRE Yes, take it—you never earned anything so honestly

MAURICE (*holds aloft a garter set with diamonds*) To whom shall I give this? (GEORGETTE, MICHETTE and FLIPOTTE *hasten to him and reach for it*) Patience, my sweet mice We'll talk it over I'll give it to the one who invents a new caress

SÉVERINE (*to ROLLIN*) Would you allow me to compete with them?

ROLLIN Séverine, you drive me mad

MARQUIS I think it is time for us to go

SÉVERINE By no means I'm enjoying myself vastly (*To ROLLIN*) I'm just getting into the spirit of it

MICHETTE How did you get that garter?

MAURICE There was a great crowd in the church—and she thought I was making overtures

(*All laugh Meanwhile, GRAIN has "lifted" FRANCOIS' purse*)

FRANCOIS (*showing the money to ALBIN*) All bogus—imitation money
(GRAIN *is anxious to get out*)

PROSPÈRE (*follows him and says softly*) Give me the purse you just took from that young man

GRAIN I?

PROSPÈRE Be quick—or I'll have you set upon—

GRAIN You needn't be rude about it (*Gives him the purse*)

PROSPÈRE I have no time to search you now, and dear knows what else you've pocketed Go back to your place

FLIPOTTE I know I'll win that garter

PROSPÈRE (*to FRANÇOIS, throwing him the purse*) There's your purse—you lost it out of your pocket

FRANÇOIS Thanks, Prospère (*To ALBIN*) You see how honest they are (*HENRI, who has come in and has been sitting in the rear unobserved for some time, now rises*)

ROLLIN Henri! . Look, there's Henri!

SÉVERINE The artist you told me about?

MARQUIS He's the main attraction here—the reason for our coming (*HENRI strides forward in majestic silence*)

THE PLAYERS What's wrong, Henri? What's the matter?

ROLLIN Watch his expression a world of suffering He is playing the rôle of one who has committed a crime through soul-torment.

SÉVERINE Splendid!

ALBIN Why doesn't he commence?

ROLLIN He's superb—watch him He's stunned by his own emotions

FRANÇOIS But he overacts a little—seems to be preparing for a monologue

PROSPÈRE Henri, Henri, where have you been?

HENRI I have just killed a man

ROLLIN What did I say!

PROSPÈRE Who?

HENRI My wife's lover (*PROSPÈRE looks at him and it dawns on him that it may be true*)

HENRI (*looks up*) Yes, I've done it. Why do you stare at me so? It's the truth It is so unexpected? You know what my wife is It was bound to come

PROSPÈRE And she? Where is she?

FRANÇOIS You see, Prospère gives him his cue How natural it all seems (*Noise outside, not too loud*)

JULES What is that noise out there?

MARQUIS You hear it, Séverine?

ROLLIN It sounds like troops marching by

FRANÇOIS Oh no, it's our beloved Parisian populace—growling (*Uneasiness in the cellar-room until the noise dies away*)

FRANÇOIS Go on, Henri, go on

PROSPÈRE Tell us, Henri, where is your wife? Where did you leave her?

HENRI Oh, I'm not worried about her She won't die of it This one or that one—what do these women care? There are a thousand good-looking men in Paris What matter whether this one or that one—

BALTHASAR May the same fate take all men who take our women—

SCAEVOLA All who take what belongs to us!

SERGEANT (*to PROSPÈRE*) These are inciting speeches

ALBIN It's frightful—these people are serious—mean every word they utter

SCAEVOLA Down with all the parasites of France I'll wager that fellow he caught with his wife was one of the beasts who rob us of our bread

ALBIN I suggest that we go

SÉVERINE Henri! Henri!

MARQUIS But Marquise, Séverine—!

SÉVERINE Please, my dear Marquis, will you ask that man how he caught his wife? Or shall I ask him?

MARQUIS (*unwillingly*) Will you tell us, Henri, how you succeeded in catching those two?

HENRI (*who has been deep in thought*) Do you know my wife? She is the most beautiful and the most depraved being under the sun—and I love her We have known each other for seven years but only yesterday did she become my wife In all those seven years, there was not one day that she did not lie to me For everything about her lied—her eyes and her lips, her kisses and her smiles

FRANCOIS He overdoes it a trifle

HENRI Every young one and every old one—every one who attracted her, and every one who paid her—even every one who desired her—could have her and I knew it

SÉVERINE Not every man could say as much

HENRI Yet nevertheless my friends, she loved me Can you understand that? From every one of those others, she came back to me From the handsome ones and the ill-favored ones—from the clever ones and the stupid ones, from tramps, vagabonds, rascallions and from cavaliers—always she came back to me

SÉVERINE (*to ROLLIN*) Now if you could only understand that this coming back is the only real love

HENRI What I suffered tortures, tortures!

ROLLIN It gives you the shivers

HENRI And yesterday I married her We dreamed—I dreamed—of our going away together, to the solitude, the infinite peace of the open country We dreamed too of having a child

ROLLIN (*tenderly*) Séverine!

SÉVERINE Yes, it's very good

ALBIN Francois, this man speaks the truth

FRANCOIS Of course, the love-story is true enough, but the murder—

HENRI I had thought a new life had opened But there was one man she had not yet forgotten Today, I returned unexpectedly and found them together Now he is no more

THE PLAYERS Who? Who? How did it happen? Where is he? Are they after you? How did it happen? Where is she?

HENRI (*always erect, in crescendo*)

I had left her at the theater—it was to be her last appearance. She was on her way to her dressing room and I left her without a misgiving. But no more than a hundred steps away it began—a terrible unrest. It was as if something were compelling my return. And I did start back to the theater, then I was ashamed and walked away again. But once more, after about a hundred steps, it pulled at me again—irresistibly. Her scene is soon over—she has only to stand for a moment on the stage, half-naked—then she is through. I waited before her dressing room. I held my ear to the door and heard whispers—I couldn't make out the words. The whispering ceased. I forced open the door. (*With a cry like a wild animal!*) It was the Duc le Cadignan—and I killed him!

PROSPÈRE (*fearing this is the truth*)
Crazy fool!
(HENRI gazes fixedly at him.)

SÉVERINE Bravo! Bravo!

ROLLIN What are you doing, Marquise? The moment you call Bravo! the illusion is lost and all the exquisite shivers are gone.

MARQUIS I can't say I find the shivers so agreeable. Let us applaud, friends, so that we can shake off this unpleasant feeling.
(*A murmur of Bravos! increasing in volume when all applaud.*)

PROSPÈRE (*to HENRI*) Save yourself, Henri! Go!

HENRI What what?

PROSPÈRE That will be enough—go, make haste!

FRANÇOIS Quiet! Let's hear what Prospère says.

PROSPÈRE (*after a brief reflection*) I tell him he must flee, before the watch at the city gates are warned. (*To HENRI*) The handsome duke was a favorite of the king. He will break you on the wheel. Why didn't you put an end to that worthless wife of yours, instead?

FRANÇOIS What marvelous teamwork magnificent!

HENRI Prospère, is it you that is crazy—or I? (*He tries to read PROSPÈRE'S eyes.*)

ROLLIN It's extraordinary! We all know that he is acting. And yet, if at this moment the Duc de Cadignan should walk in, we would take him for a ghost.
(*The tumult in the street has been growing in volume. Shouts and yells are heard, as the door bursts open and people press in, headed by GRASSET, with LEBRÈT following. Cries of "Vive la liberté!" outside.*)

GRASSET Here we are, boys—in here.

ALBIN What is this? Part of the programme?

FRANÇOIS No—I fear not.

MARQUIS What is the meaning of this?

SÉVERINE Who are the people?

GRASSET Come in, children. My good friend Prospère always has a barrel of wine in reserve—and to-night we have earned it. (*Hullabaloo in the street.*) Friends, brothers,

we have taken it! We have taken it!
(*Shouts of "Vive la liberté!" outside*)

SÉVERINE What is happening?

MARQUIS Let us go! Let us go! The mob is pouring in

ROLLIN How do you think we can get out?

GRASSET It has fallen—the Bastille has fallen!

PROSPÈRE What's that you're saying? Is that true?

GRASSET Don't you hear?
(*ALBIN would draw his sword*)

FRANCOIS Leave it where it is—or we are all lost

GRASSET (*reeling down the stairs*) And if you hurry out, you'll see a merry sight You'll see the head of our dear Delaunay stuck on the end of a pike

MARQUIS Is the fellow mad?

THE CROWD Vive la liberté!

GRASSET We lopped off the heads of a dozen of them The Bastille is ours—the prisoners are free! Paris belongs to the people

PROSPÈRE Hear you—hear! Paris is ours!

GRASSET Look how he gains courage! Yell if you like, Prospère, it can't harm you now

PROSPÈRE (*to the NOBLEMEN*) What do you say to that, you swine? The play is ended The joke is over

ALBIN Didn't I tell you?

SERGEANT Silence! (*Laughter*) I prohibit the continuance of this performance

PROSPÈRE He has gone mad What is that to you now? You killed him—there's nothing more you can do

FRANCOIS For God's sake—is this true or not?

PROSPÈRE Yes, it is true

GRASSET Henri, from now on you'll be my friend Vive la liberté! Vive la liberté!

FRANCOIS Henri, do speak!

HENRI She was his mistress—the Duke's mistress And I never knew it And he lives he still lives
(*There is a stir among the bystanders intense interest*)

SÉVERINE (*to the OTHERS*) Well, what is the truth?

ALBIN For heaven's sake—
(*The DUC DE CADIGNAN forces his way through the crowd on the stairs*)

SEVERINE (*the first to observe him*) The Duke!

THE OTHERS The Duke! The Duke!

DUC Why yes, but what of it?

PROSPÈRE It's a ghost

DUC Not so far as I know Let me get in there

ROLLIN I'm positive all this was prearranged The mob out there be-

long to Prospère's troupe Bravo!
 Prospère, you've done it well

out a duke is a friend of the people
 Vive la liberté!

DUC How is this? You don't mean
 you are still dawdling here, while
 outside don't you know, then,
 what is going on? I have seen
 the head of Delaunay go past me on
 the end of a pole Why do you look
 at me that way? (*He steps down
 into the room*) Henri—

ALBIN (*with drawn sword*) Out of
 the way, there! Follow me,
 my friends
 (LÉOCADIE *elbows her way in and
 down the stairs*)

VOICES FROM THE CROWD Léocadie!

FRANCOIS Watch out for Henri!
 (HENRI *throws himself insanely
 upon the DUC and thrusts a dagger
 into his throat*)

OTHERS His wife!

SERGEANT (*rises*) That is going too
 far

LÉOCADIE Let me in! I want
 to reach my husband (*She runs for-
 ward, sees the DUKE'S body and
 screams*) Who did this? Henri!
 (HENRI *looks at her*) Henri—why
 did you do this?

ALBIN He is bleeding

HENRI Why?

ROLLIN A murder has been com-
 mitted

LÉOCADIE But yes, I don't have to
 be told—it was for my sake—and I
 —I am not worth it

SÉVERINE He is dying

MARQUIS I am distraught dear
 Séverine, at having brought you to
 this place, and today of all days

SÉVERINE (*a little unsteadily*)
 Why? I think it's thrilling It isn't
 every day that you can see a real
 duke really murdered

GRASSET (*beginning a speech*) Citi-
 zens of Paris! We wish to celebrate
 our victory Chance has led us
 through the streets of Paris to this
 welcome resort It couldn't have
 been a better one Nowhere can the
 cry of Vive la liberté! sound more
 appropriate than over the dead
 body of a duke
 (VOICES FROM THE CROWD *call
 "Vive la liberté!"*)

ROLLIN I don't understand it yet
 It's bewildering

SERGEANT Quiet! No one is to leave
 this room

FRANCOIS I think we had best go
 The people are mad Let's go at
 once

GRASSET What does *he* want?

ALBIN Are we going to leave the
 duke's body—

SERGEANT (*going to HENRI*) I arrest
 this man, in the name of the law

SÉVERINE Vive la liberté!

GRASSET (*laughs*) We make the
 laws now, simpleton He who wipes

MARQUIS Are you out of your head?
 Have you lost your wits?

(CITIZENS, *including* PLAYERS, LEBRÊT Stop these people—they
shout "Vive la liberté!") are running away from us

SÉVERINE Rollin, wait for me to-
night in front of the house I'll throw
a key down as before I feel greatly
exhilarated

GRASSET Let them go for to-
day Let them go they will
not escape us

CURTAIN

A Miracle of Saint Antony

A SATIRIC LEGEND

BY MAURICE MAETERLINCK

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY RALPH ROEDER

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CHARACTERS

BLESSED SAINT ANTONY

GUSTAVUS

ACHILLES

THE DOCTOR

THE PASTOR

JOSEPH

A SERGEANT OF POLICE

THE MAIDEN LADY HORTENSIA

VIRGINIA

VALENTINE

AN OLD LADY

A GUEST

ANOTHER GUEST

ANOTHER GUEST

ANOTHER GUEST

*The action passes at the present day in a small provincial town in the
Low Countries*

A MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTONY

SCENE ONE

FIRST SCENE—*The entrance-hall of an old and spacious middle-class home-
stead in a small town in the provinces On the left the front door, giving
onto the street In the rear a small flight of steps leading up to a glass door,
through which one enters the house On the right another door Against the
walls leather-covered benches, a couple of wooden stoves and a clothes rack,
on which are hats, a cape and wraps As the curtain rises, the old drudge
VIRGINIA, her skirts trussed up and her legs bare, stands with her feet in
wooden clogs amid pails and mops, whisks and brooms, washing away the
tracks on the vestibule floor From time to time she breaks off to blow her
nose voluminously and to wipe a tear away with the corner of her blue
apron There is a ring at the house door, VIRGINIA goes to open it, and on
the sill appears, bare-headed and bare-footed, the tall and emaciated form
of an old man, with scrubby beard and hair, clothed in a soiled, sack-like,
faded and much dirtied cowl*

VIRGINIA (*opening the door cau-
tiously*) Well, what is it? God bless
us! Another beggar! What are you
after?

ST ANTONY Let me in

VIRGINIA No, you're too muddy
Stay out there What do you want?

ST ANTONY To enter

VIRGINIA What for?

ST ANTONY To restore Miss Hor-
tensia to life

VIRGINIA To restore Miss Hortensia
to life? Go along! Who are you?

ST ANTONY Blessed Saint Antony

VIRGINIA Of Padua?

ST ANTONY The same (*His halo
glows and brightens*)

VIRGINIA Jesus! Jesus! And His
Mother Mary! Well! Well! (*She
swings the door wide open, falls on
her knees and begins to pray rap-
idly, running through the Angelic
Salutation, her hands folded on her
broomstick Then she kisses the hem
of the Saint's robe and resumes
mechanically and without think-
ing*) Blessed Saint Antony, have
pity on us! Pray for us, Blessed
Saint Antony! Pray for us!

ST ANTONY Let me in and close the
door

VIRGINIA (*getting up crossly*) Well,
wipe your feet there on the mat

ST ANTONY (*obeying her awk-
wardly*) She is laid out in there

VIRGINIA (*bewildered but pleased*)
How did you know that? Sure
enough, she is laid out in the parlor!
Oh, sir, the poor old lady! Just

turned seventy-seven—that ain't much, is it?—and wasn't she the God-fearing creature, you don't know the savings she laid by And the money owing to her! She was rich, sure enough She's left a neat two millions behind her Two millions is a heap of money, ain't it?

ST ANTONY Yes, indeed

VIRGINIA And it all goes to her two nephews, Mr Gus and Mr Achilles and their children Mr Gus gets the house too And she left a sum to the pastor and to the church and to the sexton and the sacristan and to the poor and to the Vicar and to fourteen Jesuits and to all her domestics, according to how long they was in her service It's me that gets the most of that I was 33 years in her service I'm down for 3,300 francs That's a handsome sum!

ST ANTONY So it is

VIRGINIA She paid me my just wages regular You can say what you please there ain't many a master would treat you that way, after they're dead Oh! She was a God-fearing soul! And they're burying her today Everybody has sent flowers You ought to see the parlor On the bed, on the table, on the chairs—the arm chairs—the piano—everywhere flowers! And all white, it's so pretty! We don't know where to put all the wreaths (*There is a ring She opens the door and comes back with two wreaths*) Here are two more (*She scrutinizes the wreaths and weighs them in her hand*) They're fine-looking, ain't they? Just hold them a minute till I get through this washing up (*She gives the wreaths to SAINT ANTONY, who takes one in each hand oblig-*

ngly) This afternoon she'll be taken to the cathedral! Everything's got to be in order and I've no more than time

ST ANTONY Lead me to the corpse

VIRGINIA Lead you to the corpse? Now?

ST ANTONY Yes

VIRGINIA No!—no, sir! You'll have to wait awhile, they're still at table

ST ANTONY God has enjoined haste, it is time to restore her to life

VIRGINIA You don't mean to raise her up from the dead?

ST ANTONY Yes

VIRGINIA But she's three days dead, she's stale

ST ANTONY Therefore, on the third day, I shall raise her

VIRGINIA For her to live again like she used to?

ST ANTONY Yes

VIRGINIA Then we ain't to inherit nothing?

ST ANTONY No

VIRGINIA But what'll Mr Gus say to that?

ST ANTONY I don't know

VIRGINIA And my three thousand, three hundred francs—now, that's too bad

ST ANTONY Haven't you laid b, anything, Virginia?

VIRGINIA Not a farthing I've
a sick sister takes every penny I
earn

ST ANTONY. Well, if you are afraid
you'll lose three thousand francs

VIRGINIA Three thousand, three
hundred francs!

ST ANTONY If you're afraid you'll
lose them, I shall not resurrect Miss
Hortensia

VIRGINIA Couldn't you arrange it so
she could live just the same and I
needn't lose the money?

ST ANTONY No, one thing or the
other I have heard your prayers
and returned to earth, Virginia, and
now you must choose

VIRGINIA (*after brief reflection*)
Well, then resurrect her (*The
halo glows again*) What's the mat-
ter with you now?

ST ANTONY You have made me
happy

VIRGINIA And when I do that, does
your thing, your lantern there, be-
gin to shine?

ST ANTONY Yes,—all by itself

VIRGINIA That's queer Don't stand
so near the curtains, you'll set them
on fire

ST ANTONY Don't be afraid, the
flame is heavenly Lead me to the
corpse

VIRGINIA I told you before, you
must wait I can't be disturbing
them now Can't you see they're all
at table?

ST ANTONY Who?

VIRGINIA Why, who do you think?
The whole family! Her two neph-
ews, Mr Gustavus and Mr Achil-
les with his wife and their children
and Mr George and Mr Alberic
and Mr Alphonse and Mr Desiré,
and our cousins and their ladies,
and the Pastor and the Doctor, and
I don't know who all besides
Friends and relatives we never see
before, and some from way away!
They're all rich people!

ST ANTONY Well, well

VIRGINIA You see the street, coming
in, didn't you?

ST ANTONY What street?

VIRGINIA What street? Jesus Christ!
Our street! In front of our house

ST ANTONY Yes

VIRGINIA A grand street Well, all
the houses on the left side—except
the first—you know that little one
where the baker lives—they all be-
long to my mistress All the houses
on the right side of the street belong
to Mr Gus, twenty-two of them in
all That's a neat sum!

ST ANTONY Yes, indeed

VIRGINIA (*pointing to the halo*)
Look, your thing there, your lan-
tern's going out

ST ANTONY (*feeling for his halo*)
Yes, I'm afraid

VIRGINIA It don't burn very long
somehow, does it?

ST ANTONY It depends, Virginia, on
the thoughts it encounters

VIRGINIA Hm! Well, they own woods and farms and houses, too Mr Gus has a big starch factory—"Gustavus's Starch, Ltd"—you heard of it, I'm sure Yes, it's a mighty good and a mighty rich family Four independent gentlemen in it as never did a stroke of work! They're all come to the burial, and some from way away There's one of 'em had to travel two days in the night to be here prompt I'll show him to you, he's got a beard They're all at table still We can't be disturbing them now I tell you, it's a right big lunch, twenty-four covers I see the bill of fare oysters, two soups, three entrées, lobster jelly and trout à la Schubert Do you know what that is?

ST ANTONY No

VIRGINIA Well, no more do I, it's something good, but not for the likes of you and me There's no champagne on account of the mourning, but all other kinds of wine My mistress had the best cellar in town! I'll try to sneak you out a good glass if they leave us anything Just you wait here, I'll see what they are doing now (*She goes up the stairs, draws the curtains aside and looks through the glass doors*) I think it's that trout—that trout à la Schubert! Oh, there's Joseph He's just taking the pineapple off They've a good two hours ahead of them You'd better sit down No, no, not on the leather there, you are too dirty, here, on this stool I must hurry and clean up now (ST ANTONY *sits down on the stool*, VIRGINIA *goes back to her work and looks for a pail*) Look out, look out Lift up your feet! I'm pouring the water No! No! get out of that, you're in my way there! Sit

down in that corner! Put the stool up against the wall (ST ANTONY *does as he is told*) There now you won't get wet Ain't you hungry?

ST ANTONY No, thank you, but I am in a hurry, so go and tell your masters

VIRGINIA You're in a hurry? What have you got to do?

ST ANTONY A few miracles

VIRGINIA Well, I can't be disturbing them at table We must wait till coffee is served Mr Gus might be very angry I don't know what he'll say to you, sir he ain't for having poor people come into his house And you don't look over-prosperous

ST ANTONY Saints are never prosperous

VIRGINIA But you get a good bit given away to you

ST ANTONY Not everything that is given reaches Heaven, Virginia

VIRGINIA Don't it? And it's the priests take what we give you, is it? I've heard say that, but I wouldn't have believed it! Jesus Christ!—Listen to me!

ST ANTONY Well?

VIRGINIA Do you see up there behind you—that brass tap?

ST ANTONY Yes

VIRGINIA Where the water's dribbling out—there's an empty pail behind you, suppose you was to fill it now

ST ANTONY Certainly

VIRGINIA I'll never get this all clean if some one don't lend me a hand And not a soul helps me, they're all off their heads When a body dies, it's too much trouble! But I guess I know all about that! Lucky it don't happen every day, ain't it? This ain't what you'd call an easy job I've still got the copper to shine Now then, turn off the tap, that's it And bring me the pail Ain't your feet cold? Be careful of the wreaths there, lay them on the stool That's right Over there (ST ANTONY brings her the pail) Thank you If you're half as honest as you are obliging (There is a sound of voices and of chairs being moved) Listen! (She goes to the glass door) They're quarreling! No, they're just eating! Joseph's just helpin' the pastor The master's coming out I'll tell him you want to Sh! Put down the pail! Sit down (ST ANTONY obeys and is about to sit down on the stool on which the wreaths are lying) Hey, what are you doing? You're sitting on the wreaths

ST ANTONY Oh, I don't see very well!

VIRGINIA Blockhead! They're a pretty sight now What'll Mr Gus say? Well, God be praised! They ain't so bad after all Sit down over there, hold on to 'em and be quiet as a mouse (Kneeling in front of the Saint) And now, sir, I would like to ask you one more thing

ST ANTONY Speak, do not be afraid

VIRGINIA Could you give me your blessing, sir, now as we're alone? When the company comes in, I'll be sent out of the room, and I won't

see you no more I'm old and may need it

ST ANTONY (rises and blesses her, his halo glowing) I bless you, my daughter, for you are good, guileless of heart, open of mind, without fault, without fear, without reticence before the great secrets, and faithful in your small duties Go in peace, my child, and tell your masters

(Exit VIRGINIA ST ANTONY sits down again on the stool Presently the glass door opens and GUSTAVUS strides in followed by VIRGINIA)

GUSTAVUS (his voice raised in anger) What's the meaning of this? What do you want? Who are you?

ST ANTONY (rising discreetly). Blessed Saint Antony

GUSTAVUS Blessed Saint—

ST ANTONY Of Padua

GUSTAVUS What kind of a hoax is this? I am not in the mood for laughing I guess you have had too much to drink Well, speak up what are you here for? What do you want?

ST ANTONY To revive your aunt

GUSTAVUS Revive my—? (To VIRGINIA) He's drunk! Why did you let him in? (To ST ANTONY) Listen to me, my man, we have no time for fooling, my aunt is to be buried today You can come back tomorrow. Here! Here are a few farthings

ST ANTONY (gently obstinate) I wish to revive her today

GUSTAVUS All right, all right! after the ceremony Come on now, here's the door

ST ANTONY I shall not leave until I have revived her

to the spot Stupefied) Well, what the

GUSTAVUS (*flaming out*) Here, you! I've had enough of this You're getting tiresome, do you hear? My guests are waiting for me (*He opens the street door*) Out with you now and quick

GUSTAVUS What's the matter?

JOSEPH I don't know what's happened to him! There 'e stands like 'e was rooted and growing there 'E won't budge

ST ANTONY I shall not leave until I have revived

GUSTAVUS Oh, this is too Well, well, we'll see whether you will or not (*He opens the glass door and shouts*) Joseph!

JOSEPH (*appears on the step, a large steaming platter in his hand*) Yes, sir

GUSTAVUS (*with a glance at the dish*) What's that?

JOSEPH The fowl, sir

GUSTAVUS Give it to Virginia and kick this vagabond out on the street, do you hear? And promptly

JOSEPH (*giving VIRGINIA the dish*) Certainly, sir (*Going up to the Saint*) Come on, old codger, didn't you hear? You're in the wrong house! Come along with you! Get out! You won't? Open the door, Virginia

GUSTAVUS I'll open it (*He opens the street door*)

JOSEPH All right, that's enough, he ain't ridin' out (*Rolling up his sleeves and spitting in his hands*) So, now, we'll see about you (*He grasps ST ANTONY firmly to swing him out, but the Saint stands rooted*

GUSTAVUS I'll help you (*Both try to push ST ANTONY out, but he remains immovable Half-aside*) Well, on my soul! He's dangerous Be careful He's got the strength of a Hercules We had better deal gently with him Now listen to me, my friend, you understand, don't you, that on such a day, at the burial of my revered aunt

ST ANTONY Whom I have come to revive from the dead

GUSTAVUS But you understand, surely, that this is scarcely the time The fowl will be cold, my guests are waiting, and we are not in the mood for laughing (*ACHILLES appears, napkin in hand, on the steps*)

ACHILLES What's the matter, Gus? What's wrong? We're waiting for the fowl

GUSTAVUS The fowl! It's this old fool who won't go out

ACHILLES Is he drunk?

GUSTAVUS Of course

ACHILLES Put him out and be done with it I don't see why our meal should be spoiled for a dirty tramp

GUSTAVUS He won't go

ACHILLES What's that? Won't go?
We'll soon see about that

GUSTAVUS Try him yourself

ACHILLES I'm not going to take such
a dirty beggar by the throat It
seems to me that's Joseph's busi-
ness, or—the coachman's

GUSTAVUS We've tried, we don't
want to scuffle—in here—on such a
day (*Other guests appear at the
door, most of them still with their
mouths full and their napkins under
their arms or around their necks*)

A GUEST What's it all about?

A SECOND What are you doing, Gus?

A THIRD What's the beggar want?

A FOURTH Where has he sprung
from?

GUSTAVUS He won't go out Another
blunder of Virginia's As soon as she
catches sight of a beggar, she
she loses her head! She let this fool
in, he insists on seeing Auntie and
reviving her

A GUEST We must send for the po-
lice

GUSTAVUS For God's sake, no scene!
I don't want the police in this house
on a day like this

ACHILLES A moment, Gus

GUSTAVUS Well?

ACHILLES Have you noticed that
two or three tiles are cracked there
on the left side, at the end of the
corridor?

GUSTAVUS Yes, I know I'm going to
have a mosaic floor laid in place of
those tiles

ACHILLES It'll make it look more
friendly

GUSTAVUS Yes—one more up to
date And in place of this door and
these white curtains I thought of
putting in painted window sashes,
illustrating THE CHASE, IN-
DUSTRY, and PROGRESS, with
a garland of fruits and wild ani-
mals!

ACHILLES Yes, that would be hand-
some

GUSTAVUS I'm thinking of having
my office in there (*pointing to the
room right*) and opposite the em-
ployees

ACHILLES When are you moving in?

GUSTAVUS A few days after the
wake It would scarcely be be-
coming to move in the very next
day

ACHILLES Of course, but mean-
while, we must get rid of this—this
unbidden guest

GUSTAVUS He acts as if he were
quite at home!

ACHILLES (*to ST ANTONY, sarca-
stically*) Won't you have a chair?

ST ANTONY (*naïvely*) Thank you,
I am not tired

ACHILLES Let me have a try, I'll get
him out
(*Approaching the SAINT with a
friendly gesture*)

Well, my friend, won't you tell us who you are?

ST ANTONY Blessed Saint Antony

ACHILLES Why, of course, you are! (*To the others*) He sticks to that, but he's not vicious (*He notices the PASTOR among the GUESTS who have crowded around SAINT ANTONY with sceptical and derisive glances*) Ah, here's the pastor, he knows you, and wants to pay you his respects. Come on, pastor, saints are your business. I know more about farmers' machines and ploughshares. Here is a messenger from Heaven, pastor, the mighty Saint Antony himself, who would like to speak with you (*Under his breath to the pastor*) We want you to get him quietly to the door, without letting him notice it, as soon as he is outside, good-bye and Godspeed to him!

THE PASTOR (*unctuously and paternally*) Mighty Saint Antony, your vassal in all humility bids you welcome to this world, which we praise God you have elected to honor with your presence. What does your Holiness desire?

ST ANTONY I wish to revive Miss Hortensia

THE PASTOR Poor lady, poor lady! However, such a miracle would assuredly present no difficulties to the greatest of our saints. The dear deceased had a particular cult for you. I will conduct you to her, if your Holiness will take the trouble to follow me. (*He goes to the street door and beckons to ST ANTONY*) This way, please

ST ANTONY (*pointing to the door right*) No, that way

THE PASTOR Your Holiness will pardon me if I seem to contradict you, but on account of the press of mourners the corpse has been removed to the house opposite, which if I may mention it, also forms part of the property of dear deceased

ST ANTONY (*pointing to the door right*) In there, in there

THE PASTOR (*more and more unctuous*) To convince yourself of the contrary, your Holiness has only to follow me a moment onto the street, from there you will see the candles and black hangings

ST ANTONY (*immovable, pointing to the door on the right*) There will I enter, there, there

A GUEST He's got a nerve!

GUSTAVUS He's going a bit too far really

A GUEST Suppose we open the door and all of us rush him out

GUSTAVUS No! no! no scene! He might be nasty. He's not to be fooled with, he's got the strength of a bear. Keep your hands off Joseph and I are strong men and we couldn't budge him

ACHILLES But who told him the corpse lay in there?

GUSTAVUS Virginia, of course, she's babbled about as much as it was possible to babble

VIRGINIA Me, sir? No sir! Not me, I was attending to my work. I answered Yes and No, nothing else—Didn't I, Saint Antony? (ST ANTONY *does not reply*) Well,

Speak up when a body talks to you
friendly

ST ANTONY She told me nothing

VIRGINIA There now, you see He's
a blessed saint, he knew it all be-
forehand I tell you, there's noth-
ing he don't know

ACHILLES (*going up to the Saint and
clapping him amicably on the
shoulder*) Now, then, young fellow,
come on, step along, come, come

THE GUESTS He's moving, no, he's
not moving!

ACHILLES I've an idea

GUSTAVUS Well?

ACHILLES Where's the Doctor?

A GUEST He's still at table, he's
finishing his trout

GUSTAVUS Go and call him (*Some
go off to get the doctor*) You're
right, he's a madman, it's the Doc-
tor's business

THE DOCTOR (*appears with his
mouth full, his napkin around his
neck*) What's up? Is he mad? Is he
sick? Is he drunk? (*Looking the
saint over*) A beggar! I can do
nothing for him Well, my friend,
what's the matter with you?

ST ANTONY I wish to revive Miss
Hortensia

THE DOCTOR I see you're not a med-
ical man Let me feel your pulse
(*He feels his pulse*) Do you feel
any pain?

ST ANTONY No

THE DOCTOR (*feeling his head and
brow*) And here? Does it hurt when
I press?

ST ANTONY No

THE DOCTOR Good, good Do you
ever suffer from vertigo?

ST ANTONY No

THE DOCTOR And in your younger
days? No serious accidents? No
no youthful indiscretions? You un-
derstand what I mean? Or constipa-
tion? Eh? Well, and your tongue?
Let me have a look at that That's
right Now breathe deep Deeper,
deeper That's right What do you
want here?

ST ANTONY To go in there

THE DOCTOR What for?

ST ANTONY To revive Miss Hor-
tensia

THE DOCTOR She isn't there

ST ANTONY She is there, I see her

GUSTAVUS He won't give it up

ACHILLES Couldn't you bleed him?

THE DOCTOR What for?

ACHILLES To put him to sleep We
could easily get him on the street
then

THE DOCTOR No, no, that would be
foolish He's dangerous

ACHILLES That's the worst of it,
he's equal to all of us put together
But, after all, we aren't called upon
to put up with vagabonds, and
drunkards and fools Are we?

THE DOCTOR Do you want my opinion?

GUSTAVUS Please

THE DOCTOR We have to deal with a madman, who can easily become dangerous if we cross him. Furthermore, there is no disrespect intended to the dear deceased. I don't see why we should not gratify his simple desire and let him into the room for a moment.

GUSTAVUS Never—as long as I live! What are we coming to if a stranger can force his way into a respectable family on the crazy pretext of reviving a dead woman who never did him any harm?

THE DOCTOR As you please, it's for you to decide.

ACHILLES The Doctor's right.

THE DOCTOR There's nothing to fear. I hold myself personally responsible, and besides, we are all here and can go in with him.

GUSTAVUS Well, as far as I am concerned, put an end to the matter. But don't let anybody talk about this ridiculous incident, will you?

ACHILLES Auntie's jewels are on the chimney, Gus.

GUSTAVUS I know. I'll keep an eye on them. (To THE SAINT) Well, then, come on, this way. We haven't finished lunch yet. So a little lively, please. (All go into the room on the right, followed by SAINT ANTONY, whose halo suddenly flames out brilliantly.)

SCENE TWO

A living room. In the rear on a huge canopy bedstead lies the corpse of the maiden lady, Hortensia. Two burning candles, some branches of box-wood, etc. Left, a door. Right, a glass door leading to the garden. All the characters of the first episode troop through the door (left) into the room, followed by SAINT ANTONY, to whom GUSTAVUS shows the corpse.

GUSTAVUS Now, are you satisfied? Here lies the dear departed, quite dead, you see. And now I think we are entitled to be left alone. (To VIRGINIA) Lead the gentleman out by the garden door.

ST ANTONY One moment. (He walks into the middle of the room and standing at the foot of the bed, turns toward the corpse and speaks in a strong, grave voice.) Arise!

GUSTAVUS There, there, that's

enough. We can't stand by and have a stranger offend our most sacred feelings.

ST ANTONY Be quiet. (He goes nearer the bed and raises his voice more commandingly.) Arise!

GUSTAVUS (losing patience) Now, that's enough. Here's the door.

ST ANTONY (in a deeper and yet more commanding voice) Hortensia, return and arise from the dead!

(*To the consternation of all present the dead woman stirs slightly, half opens her eyes, spreads her folded hands, slowly sits up in bed, sets her cap straight on her head, and looks around her, vexed and reluctant, she then proceeds quietly to scratch off a spot of candle grease which she discovers on the arm of her night dress. For a moment an oppressive silence reigns, then VIRGINIA leaves the speechless group about her, hurries to the bed and throws herself into the arms of the resurrected woman.*)

VIRGINIA Miss Hortensia! She's alive! Just look at her—she's scratching away a grease spot, she is looking for her glasses! Saint Antony! Saint Antony! A miracle! A miracle! Kneel down! Kneel down!

GUSTAVUS Keep still, don't talk. This is not the time for

ACHILLES There is no doubt about it, she's alive

A GUEST It isn't possible. What has he done to her?

GUSTAVUS You can't take it seriously. She'll relapse immediately

ACHILLES Just see how she stares at us

GUSTAVUS I don't believe it yet. What kind of a world do we live in? Where are the laws of nature? Doctor, what do you say to this?

THE DOCTOR (*embarrassed*) What do I say? Why, I say—I say that it's none of my business—it's quite outside my field—quite absurd—and quite simple! She lives—ergo, she was never dead. That's no rea-

son for throwing up your hands and crying, A Miracle!

GUSTAVUS But didn't you say—

THE DOCTOR What did I say? I beg you to recall that I asserted nothing, absolutely nothing, I beg you to recall that I never even certified her death, did I? I even had very grave doubts—though I did not see fit to impart them to you at the time—for fear of raising false hopes. Besides, it is not probable that she will survive this long

ACHILLES Meanwhile, though, we must accept the evidence of our senses, the blessed evidence of our senses!

VIRGINIA There ain't no doubt! I told you he's a Saint, a big Saint. Just look, she's alive! And as fresh as a rose!

GUSTAVUS (*goes to the bed and embraces the resurrected woman*) Aunt, my dear aunt, is it really you?

ACHILLES (*also approaching the bed*) Do you know me, dear aunt? I am Achilles, your nephew

AN OLD LADY And me, auntie? I am your niece, Leontine

A YOUNG GIRL And me, godmother? I am your little Valentine to whom you left all your silver

GUSTAVUS She smiles! She recognizes us all

ACHILLES (*seeing the old lady open her mouth and move her lips*). Listen! She is trying to speak

VIRGINIA Heavenly Father! And she

has seen God Almighty! She'll tell us all about the marvels of Paradise! Kneel—kneel down!

ACHILLES Listen! Listen!

HORTENSIA (*who has been eyeing ST ANTONY with scorn and disgust, now speaks sharply*) What sort of a creature is that? Who has so far forgotten himself as to introduce into my apartment such a barefoot scamp? He'll run the carpets! Put him out at once! Virginia, haven't I told you you're not to let beggars

ST ANTONY (*raising his hand commandingly*) Silence
(*The woman stops short and sits open-mouthed, unable to utter a sound*)

GUSTAVUS You must forgive her, she doesn't yet realize what she owes to you, but we—ah! we realize what we owe you! What you have accomplished today is something, I venture to say, which no one else in this room would—or rather could—accomplish! Whether it was an accident or—something higher—who can say? For my part, I will not presume to judge, but this much I will say I am proud and happy to clasp your hand, sir

ST ANTONY I wish to leave now, I have other work to do

GUSTAVUS Oh, don't be in such a hurry! We can't let you go empty-handed! I don't know what my aunt will want to give you—that's her business, but as far as I am concerned, I shall take the matter up with my brother-in-law, and whatever he may decide—accident or miracle—we'll pay—yes, sir, we'll

pay, and no words wasted either! Yes, sir you shan't regret what you have done Eh, Achilles?

ACHILLES Why, certainly! He shan't regret what he has done

GUSTAVUS Well, we ain't very wealthy, of course, we've got children, and our expectations have all vanished now, but we'll prove our gratitude The honor of the family demands it We couldn't let it be said that a beggar, a stranger did us a—a peculiar service, and departed unrecompensed—eh? Of course, the reward will have to be in proportion to our means, which as I say are now sadly shrunken, but as far as in us lies, we will pay—pay for a good deed! To be sure, there are some services that cannot be bought—which indeed one should not attempt to pay for But . . . Don't interrupt me That's no reason for doing nothing at all So now, tell us what you would like hm

ACHILLES I propose we take up a little collection, not by way of settlement, but—

ST ANTONY I wish to leave I have other work to do

GUSTAVUS Other work to do! It ain't polite Now, listen to me, if you don't want to take anything—and I appreciate the delicacy of your feelings and bow to them—at least you will give us the pleasure, won't you, of accepting some small souvenir? A cigar-holder, say, or a stud-pin, or a meerschaum pipe I can have your name, address, and date of birth engraved on it

ST ANTONY I can accept nothing

GUSTAVUS You mean that?

ST ANTONY Yes

ACHILLES (*taking out his cigar case*) Well, at least you'll do us the honor of smoking a cigar with us?

ST ANTONY Thank you, I don't smoke

ACHILLES Wait, I've an idea Since the gentleman won't accept anything—and, like my brother, I appreciate and applaud his delicacy of feeling, as I am sure we all do—for life is a treasure that can't be bought—well, then, since he has shown himself so disinterested, perhaps he will do us the honor of lunching with us, of finishing the meal he has so auspiciously interrupted? What do you say?
(*Loud murmurs of assent*)

GUSTAVUS Yes, by all means! Come on, we are a sociable crowd we haven't any pride or airs about us, you see

ST ANTONY I am awaited elsewhere

GUSTAVUS Oh, come, you can't refuse us this! And who can be awaiting you anyway?

ST ANTONY Another corpse

GUSTAVUS Another corpse! Nothing but corpses Well, I must say, I hope you don't prefer the dead to us

ACHILLES I know what it is You would rather eat downstairs in the kitchen, wouldn't you? You'd feel more at home there

GUSTAVUS Then he can come upstairs for coffee

ACHILLES Yes, yes Ha! Ha! That's more to his taste Virginia, leave your mistress a moment, she doesn't need you now, take this gentleman downstairs and do him "the honors of your realm"! Ha! Ha! I guess Virginia and you won't go to sleep together! (*He slaps the SAINT familiarly on the belly*) Ha! ha! You old hypocrite, I see through you! So run along You old swindler, you damned old swindler!

VIRGINIA (*alarmed*) But, master!

GUSTAVUS What's wrong?

VIRGINIA I don't know, Miss Hortensia ain't free to speak no more

GUSTAVUS What?

VIRGINIA No, sir, just take a look at her yourself, please, sir She's got her mouth wide open, and moves her lips, and works her hands, but it's like her voice was gone

GUSTAVUS Dear Aunt, what's the matter? Is there something you want to say to us? (*She nods*) And you can't? Now, now, just make an effort, it's a little stiffness, that's all It will soon pass (*She makes a sign that she can no longer speak*) What's the matter with you? What do you want? (*To ST ANTONY*) What's the meaning of this?

ST ANTONY She will speak no more

GUSTAVUS She will speak no more? But but she spoke just now You heard her She was rude to you

ST ANTONY She will speak no more.

GUSTAVUS Can't you give her back her voice?

ST ANTONY No

GUSTAVUS But when will her voice come back?

ST ANTONY Never again

GUSTAVUS She'll be dumb till the day of her death?

ST ANTONY Yes

GUSTAVUS Why?

ST ANTONY She has beheld secrets she may not reveal

GUSTAVUS Secrets? What secrets?

ST ANTONY In the world of the dead

GUSTAVUS In the world of the dead? This is going too far. She spoke, we heard her, we have witnesses. You've deprived her of speech with a purpose which I now begin to see through. You have betrayed our confidence.

ACHILLES Yes, our confidence, you're absolutely irresponsible.

GUSTAVUS Who asked you to come here anyway? It's a hard thing to say, but I'd rather see her dead than in this condition. This is too terrible, too painful for us who love her.

THE DOCTOR Allow me a word. Be quiet, please. (*Going up to the SAINT*) Let me have a look at your eyes, my friend. Just what I thought. I knew what I had to expect. You see, she never was dead. There is nothing supernatural or mysterious about this. The fellow is simply gifted with a rather extraordinary nervous force. He came just at the right moment.

GUSTAVUS But what are we going to do now?

THE DOCTOR Send for the police. He's dangerous.

GUSTAVUS That's what he deserves. (*Shouting*) Joseph!

JOSEPH Yes, sir?

GUSTAVUS Run to the station and fetch a couple of officers. Tell them to bring handcuffs.

JOSEPH Yes, sir. (*He runs out*)

ST ANTONY I ask your permission to withdraw.

GUSTAVUS All right, you old rascal. Your time's up. You will be able to withdraw in a very few minutes, and in first rate company, too, just wait and see.

ACHILLES And one more bit of advice. These gentlemen who are about to honor you with their company—talk to them of farming and stock—of stock and horseflesh! Let your trade be stock farming—that's the way to get along with them. Here they are. (*JOSEPH comes back accompanied by two officers and a police sergeant*)

SERGEANT (*pointing to ST ANTONY*) Is that the offender?

GUSTAVUS That's the man.

SERGEANT (*laying his hand on ST ANTONY*) Your papers.

ST ANTONY What papers?

SERGEANT You haven't none? I knew it. What's your name?

ST ANTONY Blessed Saint Antony

SERGEANT Saint Antony? What do you take me for? That's no Christian name I want the other, your real one

ST ANTONY I have no other

SERGEANT Where did you steal this garment?

ST ANTONY I didn't steal it It's my own

SERGEANT Where were you born?

ST ANTONY In Padua

SERGEANT In Padua? Where's that? What province?

GUSTAVUS It's in Italy, Sergeant

SERGEANT I know, I know, but I want him to tell me So you're an Italian! Just what I thought Where do you hail from?

ST ANTONY From Paradise

SERGEANT From Paradise? And what sort of a reformatory is that?

ST ANTONY It is the abode to which the souls of the departed in the bosom of their Maker turn .

SERGEANT What has he done? Stolen?

GUSTAVUS I shouldn't like to say whether he has stolen or not I haven't had time yet to see, and I don't believe in offhand accusations, but what he has done is, in my opinion, far worse

SERGEANT Of course Of course!

GUSTAVUS You know what an affliction we are laboring under, Sergeant Apparently, he reckoned on the upset condition of the household and our grief to get a good haul He had probably learned from an accomplice that the jewels and the silver of our dead aunt had been laid out on the chimney Well, unluckily for him, our aunt was not dead When she saw this suspicious-looking person in her room, she came to and began to scream for help, whereupon in revenge for his failure he deprives her of speech, and in spite of our pleading refuses to restore it to her,—naturally in the hope of being able to bring us to terms! I beg you to notice that I am not lodging a complaint, I am merely stating the facts of the case Besides, you can ask the Doctor here

THE DOCTOR I will give the required information in the presence of the Police Lieutenant If you wish I will draw up a report

ACHILLES He is either a malefactor or a madman, or both, in any case a dangerous individual who ought to be kept under lock and key

SERGEANT Of course Rabutteau!

THE OFFICER Yes, sir

SERGEANT The handcuffs

GUSTAVUS And now, gentlemen, after all this trouble, won't you do us the honor of drinking a glass of wine with us before you go?

SERGEANT My word, we won't say No to that, eh, Rabutteau, particularly as our charge here don't look very sociable inclined

GUSTAVUS Joseph, a bottle of wine, and glasses (*Exit JOSEPH*) We will drink to the recovery of my aunt

SERGEANT Not a bad idea—in such weather!

GUSTAVUS Is it still raining?

SERGEANT A regular flood, sir! I just stepped across the street, and look at this cloak!

(*JOSEPH returns with a tray and passes glasses to the assembled company*)

SERGEANT (*raising his glass*) Ladies and gentlemen, your health!

GUSTAVUS Your health, Sergeant (*All touch glasses with the officers*) Won't you have another?

SERGEANT I'm ready enough, I guess (*Licking his lips*) It's a good wine, sir

ST ANTONY I am thirsty I would like a glass of water

SERGEANT (*scornfully*) A glass of water! Ha, but to hark to the storm outside! You'll get plenty of water in a minute Just wait, young man, till we get you out—you'll get your mouth full Well, come on, we've delayed long enough (*The street bell rings*)

GUSTAVUS There's a ring (*JOSEPH goes out to open the door*) How late is it? It's probably the after-dinner guests

ACHILLES Not yet It's only three o'clock (*THE POLICE LIEUTENANT strides in*) Here comes the Police Lieutenant, Mitou

LIEUTENANT Good day, ladies and gentlemen I've heard all about it (*Looking at ST ANTONY*) Yes, I suspected as much, it is St Antony himself the great St Antony of Padua

GUSTAVUS You know him then?

LIEUTENANT I should say I do We've turned him out of the hospital three times You understand, he's a little (*he points to his forehead*) and each time he's turned out, he plays the same pranks, heals the sick, makes the halt whole, steals the doctors' work and all without a license! (*He goes up to the SAINT and looks him over carefully*) Yes, he's the man Or at least, well, he's changed since his last escapade But if it ain't he, it's his twin I don't know, there's something about him don't seem to me quite right, but we'll see about that in court Come on, I've got no time to waste March, my man, march

GUSTAVUS Take him out this way through the garden, it won't attract so much attention (*The door to the garden is opened Snow, wind, and rain drive into the room*)

ACHILLES Devilish weather! (*ST ANTONY is led to the door*)

VIRGINIA (*hurrying forward*) But, master, the poor man Look! He's barefooted!

GUSTAVUS Well, what of it? Are we to get him a carriage or a holy shrine?

VIRGINIA No, I'll lend him my sabots Take them, Blessed Antony, I've got others

ST ANTONY (*putting on the sabots*)
Thank you (*His halo begins to glow*)

VIRGINIA And aren't you wearing anything on your head? You'll catch cold

ST ANTONY I have nothing

VIRGINIA Take my little handkerchief I'll get you my umbrella (*She hurries out*)

ACHILLES The old fool

GUSTAVUS That's all right, but meanwhile there's a devil of a draught coming in

VIRGINIA (*returns with a huge umbrella which she gives ST ANTONY*)
Here's my umbrella

ST ANTONY (*showing his hands*).
They have bound my hands

VIRGINIA I'll go with you! (*She opens the umbrella and holds it over ST ANTONY, who goes out between the two officers The halo glows under the umbrella and the group disappears through the garden in the snow*)

GUSTAVUS (*closing the door*) At last

ACHILLES What a rascal

GUSTAVUS (*going to the bed*) Well, Aunt?

ACHILLES What's the matter with her? She is failing

THE DOCTOR (*hurrying up*) I don't know I believe

GUSTAVUS (*bending over the bed*)
Aunt! Aunt! How are you?

THE DOCTOR This time she is really dying I told you so

GUSTAVUS Impossible

ACHILLES But, Doctor, is there nothing we can do?

THE DOCTOR Nothing—unfortunately!
(*Silence All gather around the bed*)

GUSTAVUS (*the first to recover*)
What a day!

ACHILLES Listen! Did you ever hear such a storm?

GUSTAVUS Well, now, you know, we were a bit hard on the poor beggar! When you come to think of it, he really didn't do us any harm .

The Monkey's Paw

A STORY IN THREE SCENES

BY W. W. JACOBS

DRAMATIZED BY LOUIS N PARKER

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CHARACTERS

MR WHITE

MRS WHITE

HERBERT

SERGEANT-MAJOR MORRIS

MR SAMPSON

THE MONKEY'S PAW

SCENE—*The living-room of an old-fashioned cottage on the outskirts of Fulham. Set corner-wise in the left angle at the back a deep window, further front, three or four steps lead up to a door. Further forward a dresser, with plates, glasses, etc. At back an alcove with the street door fully visible. On the inside of the street door, a wire letter-box. On the right a cupboard, then a fireplace. In the center a round table. Against the wall, an old-fashioned piano. A comfortable armchair each side of the fireplace. Other chairs. On the mantelpiece a clock, old china figures, etc. An air of comfort pervades the room.*

SCENE ONE

At the rise of the curtain, MRS WHITE, a pleasant-looking old woman, is seated in the armchair below the fire, attending to a kettle which is steaming on the fire, and keeping a laughing eye on MR WHITE and HERBERT. These two are seated at the right angle of the table nearest the fire with a chess-board between them. MR WHITE is evidently losing. His hair is ruffled, his spectacles are high up on his forehead. HERBERT, a fine young fellow, is looking with satisfaction at the move he has just made. MR WHITE makes several attempts to move, but thinks better of them. There is a shaded lamp on the table. The door is tightly shut. The curtains of the window are drawn, but every now and then the wind is heard whistling outside.

MR WHITE (*moving at last, and triumphant*) There, Herbert, my boy! Got you, I think

HERBERT Oh, you're a deep 'un, Dad, aren't you?

MRS WHITE Mean to say he's beaten you at last?

HERBERT Lor, no! Why, he's overlooked—

MR. WHITE (*very excited*) I see it! Lemme have that back!

HERBERT Not much. Rules of the game!

MR. WHITE (*disgusted*) I don't hold with them scientific rules. You turn what ought to be an innocent relaxation—

MRS WHITE Don't talk so much, Father. You put him off—

HERBERT (*laughing*) Not he!

MR. WHITE (*trying to distract his attention*) Hark at the wind

HERBERT (*drily*) Ah! I'm listening
Check

MR WHITE (*still trying to distract him*) I should hardly think Sergeant-Major Morris'd come tonight

HERBERT Mate (*Rises*)

MR WHITE (*with an outbreak of disgust and sweeping the chessmen off the board*) That's the worst of living so far out Your friends can't come for a quiet chat, and you addle your brains over a confounded——

HERBERT Now, Father! Morris'll turn up all right

MR WHITE (*still in a temper*) Lover's Lane, Fulham! Ho! Of all the beastly, slushy, out-o'-the-way places to live in——! Pathway's a bog, and the road's a torrent (*To MRS WHITE, who has risen, and is at his side*) What's the County Council thinking of, that's what I want to know? Because this is the only house in the road it doesn't matter if nobody can get near it, I s'pose

MRS WHITE Never mind, dear Perhaps you'll win tomorrow (*She moves to back of table*)

MR WHITE Perhaps I'll——perhaps I'll——! What d'you mean? (*Bursts out laughing*) There! You always know what's going on inside o' me, don't you, Mother?

MRS WHITE Ought to, after thirty years, John (*She goes to dresser, and busies herself wiping tumblers on tray there He rises, goes to fireplace and lights pipe*)

HERBERT. And it's not such a bad place, Dad, after all One of the

few old-fashioned houses left near London None o' your stucco villas Home-like, I call it And so do you, or you wouldn't ha' bought it (*Rolls a cigarette*)

MR WHITE (*growling*) Nice job I made o' that, too! With two hundred pounds owin' on it

HERBERT (*on back of chair*) Why, I shall work that off in no time, Dad Matter o' three years, with the rise promised me

MR WHITE If you don't get married

HERBERT Not me Not that sort.

MRS WHITE I wish you would, Herbert A good, steady, lad—— (*She brings the tray with a bottle of whisky, glasses, a lemon, spoons, buns, and a knife to the table*)

HERBERT Lots o' time, Mother Sufficient for the day—as the sayin' goes Just now my dynamos don't leave me any time for love-making Jealous they are, I tell you!

MR WHITE (*chuckling*) I lay awake o' night often, and think If Herbert took a nap, and let his what-d'you-call-ums——dynamos, run down, all Fulham would be in darkness Lord! what a joke!

HERBERT Joke! And me with the sack! Pretty idea of a joke you've got, I don't think (*Knock at outer door*)

MRS WHITE Hark! (*Knock repeated, louder*)

MR WHITE (*going toward door*) That's him That's the Sergeant-Major (*He unlocks door, back*)

HERBERT (*removes chess-board*)
Wonder what yarn he's got for us
tonight (*Places chess-board on
piano*)

MRS WHITE (*goes up right, busies
herself putting the other armchair
rearer fire, etc*) Don't let the door
slam, John!

(MR WHITE *opens the door a little,
struggling with it* Wind SERGEANT-
MAJOR MORRIS, *a veteran with a
distinct military appearance—left
arm gone—dressed as a commis-
sionaire, is seen to enter* MR WHITE
*helps him off with his coat, which
he hangs up in the outer hall*)

MR WHITE (*at the door*) Slip in
quick! It's as much as I can do to
hold it against the wind

SERGEANT Awfull! Awfull! (*Busy
taking off his cloak, etc*) And a mile
up the road—by the cemetery—it's
worse Enough to blow the hair off
your head

MR WHITE Give me your stick

SERGEANT If 'twasn't I knew what
a welcome I'd get—

MR WHITE (*preceding him into
the room*) Sergeant-Major Morris!

MRS WHITE Tut! tut! So cold you
must be! Come to the fire, do'ee,
now

SERGEANT How are you, marm?
(*To HERBERT*) How's yourself,
laddie? Not on duty yet, eh? Day-
week, eh?

HERBERT No sir Night week But
here's half an hour yet

SERGEANT (*sitting in the armchair*

above the fire, toward which MRS
WHITE *is motioning him* MR WHITE
mixes grog for MORRIS) Thank'ee
kindly, marm That's good—hah!
That's a sight better than the
trenches at Chitral That's better
than settin' in a puddle with the
rain pourin' down in buckets, and
the natives takin' pot-shots at you

MRS WHITE Didn't you have no
umbrellas? (*Corner below fire,
kneels before it, stirs it, etc*)

SERGEANT Umbrell—? Ho! ho!
That's good! Eh, White? That's
good Did ye hear what she said!
Umbrellas!— And goloshes! Ana
hot-water bottles!—Ho, yes! No of
fence, marm, but it's easy to see you
was never a soldier

HERBERT (*rather hurt*) Mother
spoke out o' kindness, sir

SERGEANT And well I know it, and
no offense intended No, marm,
'ardship, 'ardship is the soldier's lot
Starvation, fever, and get yourself
shot That's a bit o' my own

MRS WHITE You don't look to've
taken much harm—except— (*In-
dicates his empty sleeve She takes
kettle to table, then returns to fire*)

SERGEANT (*showing a medal hidden
under his coat*) And that I got this
for No, marm Tough Thomas
Morris is tough (MR WHITE *is hold-
ing a glass of grog under the SER-
GEANT's nose*) And sober What's
this now?

MR WHITE Put your nose in it,
you'll see

SERGEANT Whisky? And hot? And
sugar? And a slice o' lemon? No I

said I'd never—but seen' the sort o' night Well! (*Waving the glass at them*) Here's another thousand a year!

MR WHITE (*also with a glass*) Same to you, and many of 'em

SERGEANT (*to HERBERT, who has no glass*) What? Not you?

HERBERT (*laughing and sitting across chair*) Oh! 't isn't for want of being sociable But my work don't go with it Not if 'twas ever so little I've got to keep a cool head, a steady eye, and a still hand The fly-wheel might gobble me up

MRS WHITE Don't, Herbert (*Sits in armchair below fire*)

HERBERT (*laughing*) No fear, Mother

SERGEANT Ah! You electricians!—Sort o' magicians, you are Light! says you—and light it is And, power! says you—and the trams go whizzin' And, knowledge! says you—and words go 'ummin' to the ends o' the world It fair beats me—and I've seen a bit in my time, too

HERBERT (*nudges his father*) Your Indian magic? All a fake, Governor The fakir's fake

SERGEANT Fake, you call it? I tell you, I've *seen* it

HERBERT (*nudging his father with his foot*) Oh, come, now! Such as what? Come, now!

SERGEANT I've seen a cove with no more clothes on than a babby, (*to MRS WHITE*) if you know what I mean—take an empty basket—

empty, mind!—as empty as—as this here glass——

MR WHITE Hand it over, Morris (*Hands it to HERBERT, who goes quickly behind table and fills it*)

SERGEANT Which was not my intention, but used for illustration

HERBERT (*while mixing*) Oh, I've seen the basket trick, and I've read how it was done Why, I could do it myself, with a bit o' practice Ladle out something stronger (*HERBERT brings him the glass*)

SERGEANT Stronger?—What do you say to an old fakir chuckin' a rope up in the air—in the air, mind you!—and swarming up it, same as if it was 'ooked on—and vanishing clean out o' sight?—I've seen *that* (*HERBERT goes to table, plunges a knife into a bun and offers it to the SERGEANT with exaggerated politeness*)

SERGEANT (*eying it with disgust*) Bun—? What for?

HERBERT That yarn takes it (*MR and MRS WHITE delighted*)

SERGEANT Mean to say you doubt my word?

MRS WHITE No, no! He's only taking you off—You shouldn't, Herbert

MR WHITE Herbert always was one for a bit o' fun!

(*HERBERT puts bun back on table, comes round in front, and moving the chair out of the way, sits cross-legged on the floor at his father's side*)

SERGEANT But it's true Why, if I cnoose, I could tell you things—
But there! You don't get no more yains out o' me

MR WHITE Nonsense, old friend
(*Puts down his glass*) You're not going to get shirty about a bit o' fun (*Moves his chair nearer MORRIS's*) What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw, or something?
(*Nudges HERBERT, and winks at MRS WHITE*)

SERGEANT (*gravely*) Nothing
Leastways, nothing worth hearing

MRS WHITE (*with astonished curiosity*) Monkey's paw—?

MR WHITE Ah—you was tellin' me—

SERGEANT Nothing Don't go on about it (*Puts his empty glass to his lips—then stares at it*) What? Empty agam? There! When I begin thinkin' o' the paw, it makes me that absent-minded—

MR WHITE (*rises and fills glass*)
You said you always carried it on you

SERGEANT So I do, for fear o' what might happen (*Sunk in thought*)
Ay!—ay!

MR WHITE (*handing him his glass refilled*) There (*Sits again in same chair*)

MRS WHITE What's it for?

SERGEANT You wouldn't believe me, if I was to tell you

HERBERT I will, every word

SERGEANT Magic, then! Don't you laugh!

HERBERT I'm not Got it on you now?

SERGEANT Of course

HERBERT Let's see it
(*Seeing the SERGEANT embarrassed with his glass, MRS WHITE rises, takes it from him, places it on mantelpiece and remains standing*)

SERGEANT Oh, it's nothing to look at (*Hunting in his pocket*) Just an ordinary—little paw—dried to a mummy (*Produces it and holds it toward MRS WHITE*) Here

MRS WHITE (*who has leant forward eagerly to see it, starts back with a little cry of disgust*) Oh!

HERBERT Give us a look (*MORRIS passes the paw to MR WHITE, from whom HERBERT takes it*) Why, it's all dried up!

SERGEANT I said so
(*Wind*)

MRS WHITE (*with a slight shudder*) Hark at the wind! (*Sits again in her old place*)

MR WHITE (*taking the paw from HERBERT*) And what might there be special about it?

SERGEANT (*unpresswely*) That there paw has had a spell put upon it!

MR WHITE No? (*In great alarm he thrusts the paw back into MORRIS's hand*)

SERGEANT (*pensively, holding the paw in the palm of his hand*) Ah!

By an old fakir He was a very holy man He'd sat all doubled up in one spot goin on for fifteen year thinkin o things And he wanted to show that fate ruled people That everything was cut and dried from the beginnin as you might say That there warn't no gettin away from it And that if you tried to you caught it hot (*Pauses solemnly*) So he put a spell on this bit of a paw It might ha been anything else but he took the first thing that came handy Ah! He put a spell on it and made it so that three people (*looking at them and with deep meaning*) could each have three wishes

(*All but MRS WHITE laugh rather nervously*)

MRS WHITE Ssh! Don't!

SERGEANT (*more gravely*) But——! But mark you though the wishes was granted those three people would have cause to wish they *hadn't* been

MR WHITE But how *could* the wishes be granted?

SERGEANT He didn't say It would all happen so natural you might think it a coincidence if so disposed

HERBERT Why haven't you tried it sir?

SERGEANT (*gravely after a pause*) I have

HERBERT (*eagerly*) You've had your three wishes?

SERGEANT (*gravely*) Yes

MRS WHITE Were they granted?

SERGEANT (*staring at the fire*) They were

(*A pause*)

MR WHITE Has anybody else wished?

SERGEANT Yes The first owner had his three wish—— (*Lost in recollection*) Yes oh yes he had his three wishes all right I don't know what his first two were (*very impressively*) but the third was for death (*All shudder*) That's how I got the paw
(*A pause*)

HERBERT (*cheerfully*) Well! Seems to me you've only got to wish for things that *can't* have any bad luck about em—— (*Rises*)

SERGEANT (*shaking his head*) Ah!

MR WHITE (*tentatively*) Morris—— if you've had your three wishes—— it's no good to you now——what do you keep it for?

SERGEANT (*still holding the paw looking at it*) Fancy I s'pose I did have some idea of selling it but I don't think I will It's done mischief enough already Besides people won't buy Some of em think it's a fairy tale And some want to try it first and pay after
(*Nervous laugh from the others*)

MRS WHITE If you could have another three wishes would you?

SERGEANT (*slowly—weighing the paw in his hand and looking at it*) I don't know—I don't know—— (*Suddenly with violence flinging it in the fire*) No! I'm damned if I would!
(*Movement from all*)

MR WHITE (*rises and quickly snatches it out of the fire*) What are you doing? (WHITE goes to the fire place)

SERGEANT (*rising and following him and trying to prevent him*) Let it burn! Let the infernal thing burn!

MRS WHITE (*rises*) Let it burn Father!

MR WHITE (*wiping it on his coat sleeve*) No If you don't want it give it to me

SERGEANT (*violently*) I won't! I won't! My hands are clear of it I threw it on the fire If you keep it, don't blame me whatever happens Here! Pitch it back again

MR WHITE (*stubbornly*) I'm going to keep it What do you say Herbert?

HERBERT (*laughing*) I say keep it if you want to Stuff and nonsense anyhow

MR WHITE (*looking at the paw thoughtfully*) Stuff and nonsense Yes I wonder—(*casually*) I wish — (He was going to say some ordinary thing like I wish I were certain)

SERGEANT (*misunderstanding him violently*) Stop! Mind what you're doing That's not the way

MR WHITE What is the way?

MRS WHITE (*moving away to back of table and beginning to put the tumblers straight and the chairs in their places*) Oh don't have any thing to do with it John (*Takes glasses on tray to dresser busies*

herself there rinsing them in a bowl of water on the dresser and wiping them with a cloth)

SERGEANT That's what I say marm But if I warn't to tell him he might go wishing something he didn't mean to You hold it in your right hand and wish aloud But I warn you! I warn you!

MRS WHITE Sounds like the Arabian Nights Don't you think you might wish me four pair o' hands?

MR WHITE (*laughing*) Right you are Mother!— I wish——

SERGEANT (*pulling his arm down*) Stop it! If you must wish wish for something sensible Look here! I can't stand this Gets on my nerves Where's my coat? (*Goes into alcove*)

(MR WHITE crosses to fireplace and carefully puts the paw on mantel piece He is absorbed in it to the end of the tableau)

HERBERT I'm coming your way to the works in a minute Won't you wait? (*Helps MORRIS with his coat*)

SERGEANT (*putting on his coat*) No I'm all shook up I want fresh air I don't want to be here when you wish And wish you will as soon's my back's turned I know I know But I've warned you mind

MR WHITE (*helping him into his coat*) All right Morris Don't you fret about us (*Gives him money*) Here

SERGEANT (*refusing it*) No, I won't——

MR WHITE (*forcing it into his hand*) Yes you will (*Opens door*)

SERGEANT (*turning to the room*)
Well good night all (*To WHITE*)
Put it in the fire

ALL Good night
(*Exit SERGEANT MR WHITE closes door comes toward fireplace absorbed in the paw*)

HERBERT If there's no more in this than there is in his other stories we shan't make much out of it

MRS WHITE (*to WHITE*) Did you give him anything for it Father?

MR WHITE A trifle He didn't want it but I made him take it

MRS WHITE There, now! You shouldn't Throwing your money about

MR WHITE (*looking at the paw which he has picked up again*) I wonder——

HERBERT What?

MR WHITE I wonder whether we hadn't better chuck it on the fire?

HERBERT (*laughing*) Likely! Why were all going to be rich and famous and happy

MRS WHITE Throw it on the fire indeed when you've given money for it! So like you Father

HERBERT Wish to be an Emperor Father to begin with Then you can't be henpecked!

MRS WHITE (*going for him front of table with a duster*) You young——! (*Follows him to back of table*)

HERBERT (*running away from her hiding behind table*) Steady with that duster Mother!

MR WHITE Be quiet there! (*HERBERT catches MRS WHITE in his arms and kisses her*) I wonder—— (*He has the paw in his hand*) I don't know what to wish for and that's a fact (*He looks about him with a happy smile*) I seem to've got all I want

HERBERT (*with his hands on the old man's shoulders*) Old Dad! If you'd only cleared the debt on the house you'd be quite happy wouldn't you? (*Laughing*) Well—go ahead!—wish for the two hundred pounds that'll just do it

MR WHITE (*half laughing*) Shall I?

HERBERT Go on! Here!—I'll play slow music (*Goes to piano*)

MRS WHITE Don't see John Don't have nothing to do with it!

HERBERT Now Dad! (*Plays*)

MR WHITE I will! (*Holds up the paw as if half ashamed*) I wish for two hundred pounds (*Crash on the piano At the same instant MR WHITE utters a cry and lets the paw drop*)

MRS WHITE and HERBERT What's the matter?

MR WHITE (*gazing with horror at the paw*) It moved! As I wished it twisted in my hand like a snake

HERBERT (*goes down and picks the paw up*) Nonsense Dad Why, it's as stiff as a bone (*Lays it on the mantelpiece*)

MRS WHITE Must have been your fancy Father

watching you count the golden sovereigns

HERBERT (*laughing*) Well——? (*Looking round the room*) I don't see the money and I bet I never shall

MR WHITE (*accompanying him to the door*) I wish you wouldn't joke my boy

MR WHITE (*relieved*) Thank God there's no harm done! But it gave me a shock

HERBERT All right Dad (*Opens door*) Lord! What weather! Good night (*Exit*)
(*The old man shakes his head, closes the door locks it puts the chain up slips the lower bolt has some difficulty with the upper bolt*)

HERBERT Half past eleven I must get along I'm on at midnight (*Fetches his coat etc*) We've had quite a merry evening

MR WHITE This bolt's stiff again! I must get Herbert to look to it in the morning (*Comes into the room puts out the lamp crosses toward steps but is irresistibly attracted toward fireplace Sits down and stares into the fire His expression changes he sees something horrible*)

MRS WHITE I'm off to bed Don't be late for breakfast Herbert

HERBERT I shall walk home as usual Does me good I shall be with you about nine Don't wait though

MR WHITE (*with an involuntary cry*) Mother! Mother!

MRS WHITE You know your father never waits

HERBERT Good night Mother (*Kisses her She lights candle on dresser goes up stairs and exit*)

MRS WHITE (*appearing at the door at the top of the steps with candle*) What's the matter?

HERBERT (*coming to his father who is sunk in thought*) Good night Dad You'll find the cash tied up in the middle of the bed

MR WHITE (*mastering himself Rises*) Nothing—I—haha!—I saw faces in the fire

MR WHITE (*staring seizes HERBERT'S hand*) It moved Herbert

MRS WHITE Come along (*She takes his arm and draws him toward the steps He looks back frightened toward fireplace as they reach the first step*)

HERBERT Ah! And a monkey hanging by his tail from the bed post

TABLEAU CURTAIN

SCENE TWO

Bright sunshine The table which has been moved nearer the window is laid for breakfast MRS WHITE busy about the table MR WHITE standing in the window looking off The inner door is open showing the outer door

MR WHITE What a morning Herbert's got for walking home!

MRS WHITE You kept me awake with your tossing and tumbling——

MRS WHITE What's o'clock? (*Looks at clock on mantelpiece*) Quarter to nine I declare He's off at eight (*Crosses to fire*)

MR WHITE Ay I had a bad night

MRS WHITE It was the storm I expect How it blew!

MR WHITE Takes him half an hour to change and wash He's just by the cemetery now

MR WHITE I didn't hear it I was asleep and not asleep if you know what I mean

MRS WHITE He'll be here in ten minutes

MRS WHITE And all that rubbish about its making you unhappy if your wish *was* granted! How could two hundred pounds hurt you eh Father?

MR WHITE (*coming to the table*) What's for breakfast?

MRS WHITE Sausages (*At the mantelpiece*) Why if here isn't that dirty monkey's paw! (*Picks it up looks at it with disgust puts it back Takes sausages in dish from before fire and places them on table*) Silly thing! The idea of us listening to such nonsense!

MR WHITE Might drop on my head in a lump Don't see any other way And I'd try to bear that Though mind you Morris said it would all happen so naturally that you might take it for a coincidence if so disposed

MR WHITE (*goes up to window again*) Ay—the Sergeant Major and his yarns! I suppose all old soldiers are alike——

MRS WHITE Well—it hasn't happened That's all I know And it isn't going to (*A letter is seen to drop in the letter box*) And how you can sit there and talk about it—— (*Sharp postman's knock she jumps to her feet*) What's that?

MRS WHITE Come on Father Herbert hates us to wait (*They both sit and begin breakfast*)

MR WHITE Postman o course

MRS WHITE How could wishes be granted nowadays?

MRS WHITE (*seeing the letter from a distance in an awed whisper*) He's brought a letter John!

MR WHITE Ah! Been thinking about it all night have you?

MR WHITE (*laughing*) What did

you think he'd bring? Ton o coals?

MRS WHITE John—! John—! Suppose——?

MR WHITE Suppose what?

MRS WHITE Suppose it was two hundred pounds!

MR WHITE (*suppressing his excitement*) Eh!—Here! Don't talk nonsense. Why don't you fetch it?

MRS WHITE (*crosses and takes letter out of the box*) It's thick John—(*feels it*)—and—and it's got something crisp inside it (*Takes letter to WHITE*)

MR WHITE Who—who's it for?

MRS WHITE You

MR WHITE Hand it over then (*Feeling and examining it with ill-concealed excitement*) The ideal! What a superstitious old woman you are! Where are my specs?

MRS WHITE Let me open it

MR WHITE Don't you touch it. Where are my specs?

MRS WHITE Don't let sudden wealth sour your temper. John

MR WHITE Will you find my specs?

MRS WHITE (*taking them off man's telpiece*) Here John here (*As he opens the letter*) Take care! Don't tear it!

MR WHITE Tear what?

MRS WHITE If it was banknotes John!

MR WHITE (*taking a thick formal document out of the envelope and a crisp-looking slip*) You've gone dotty—You've made me nervous (*Reads*) Sir—Enclosed please find receipt for interest on the mortgage of £200 on your house duly received (*They look at each other*) MR WHITE *sits down to finish his breakfast silently* MRS WHITE *goes to the window*

MRS WHITE That comes of listening to tippy old soldiers

MR WHITE (*pettish*) What does?

MRS WHITE You thought there was banknotes in it

MR WHITE (*injured*) I didn't! I said all along——

MRS WHITE How Herbert will laugh when I tell him!

MR WHITE (*with gruff good humor*) You're not going to tell him. You're going to keep your mouth shut. That's what you're going to do. Why I should never hear the last of it

MRS WHITE Serve you right. I shall tell him. You know you like his fun. See how he joked you last night when you said the paw moved (*She is looking through the window*)

MR WHITE So it did. It did move. That I'll swear to.

MRS WHITE (*abstractedly she is watching something outside*) You thought it did

MR WHITE I say it did. There was no thinking about it. You saw how it upset me. Didn't you? (*She*

doesn't answer) *Didn't you?*—Why don't you listen? (*Turns round*) What is it?

MRS WHITE Nothing

MR WHITE (*turns back to his breakfast*) Do you see Herbert coming?

MRS WHITE No

MR WHITE He's about due What is it?

MRS WHITE Nothing Only a man Looks like a gentleman Leastways he's in black and he's got a top hat on

MR WHITE What about him? (*He is not interested goes on eating*)

MRS WHITE He stood at the garden gate as if he wanted to come in But he couldn't seem to make up his mind

MR WHITE Oh go on! You're full of fancies

MRS WHITE He's going—no he's coming back

MR WHITE Don't let him see you peeping

MRS WHITE (*with increasing excitement*) He's looking at the house He's got his hand on the latch No He turns away again (*Eagerly*) John! He looks like a sort of a lawyer

MR WHITE What of it?

MRS WHITE Oh you'll only laugh again But suppose—suppose he's coming about the two hundred—

MR WHITE You're not to mention it again! You're a foolish old woman Come and eat your breakfast (*Eagerly*) Where is he now?

MRS WHITE Gone down the road He has turned back He seems to've made up his mind Here he comes! Oh John and me all untidy! (*Crosses to fire There is a knock*)

MR WHITE (*to MRS WHITE who is hastily smoothing her hair*) What's it matter? He's made a mistake Come to the wrong house (*Goes to fireplace*) MRS WHITE *opens the door* MR SAMPSON *dressed from head to foot in solemn black with a top hat stands in the doorway*)

SAMPSON (*outside*) Is this Mr White's?

MRS WHITE Come in sir Please step in (*She shows him into the room He is awkward and nervous*) You must overlook our being so untidy and the room all anyhow and John in his garden coat (*To MR WHITE reproachfully*) Oh John

SAMPSON (*to MR WHITE*) Morning My name is Sampson

MRS WHITE (*offering a chair*) Won't you please be seated? (*SAMPSON stands quite still*)

SAMPSON Ah—thank you—no I think not—I think not (*Pause*)

MR WHITE (*awkwardly trying to help him*) Fine weather for the time of year

SAMPSON Ah — yes — yes — (*Pause he makes a renewed effort*) My name is Sampson—I've come—

MRS WHITE Perhaps you was wishful to see Herbert he'll be home in a minute (*Pointing*) Here's his breakfast waiting—

SAMPSON (*interrupting her hastily*) No no! (*Pause*) I've come from the electrical works—

MRS WHITE Why you might have come with him
(MR WHITE *sees something is wrong tenderly puts his hand on her arm*)

SAMPSON No—no—I've come—alone

MRS WHITE (*with a little anxiety*) Is anything the matter?

SAMPSON I was asked to call—

MRS WHITE (*abruptly*) Herbert! Has anything happened? Is he hurt? Is he hurt?

MR WHITE (*soothing her*) There there Mother Don't you jump to conclusions Let the gentleman speak You've not brought bad news I'm sure sir

SAMPSON I'm—sorry—

MRS WHITE Is he hurt? (SAMPSON bows) Badly?

SAMPSON Very badly (*Turns away*)

MRS WHITE (*with a cry*) John—!
(*She instinctively moves toward WHITE*)

MR WHITE Is he in pain?

SAMPSON He is not in pain

MRS WHITE Oh thank God! Thank God for that! Thank— (*She looks in a startled fashion at MR WHITE—realizes what SAMPSON means catches his arm and tries to turn him toward her*) Do you mean—?

(SAMPSON *avoids her look she gropes for her husband he takes her two hands in his and gently lets her sink into the armchair above the fireplace then he stands on her right between her and SAMPSON*)

MR WHITE (*hoarsely*) Go on sir

SAMPSON He was telling his mates a story Something that had happened here last night He was laughing and wasn't noticing and—and—(*hushed*) the machinery caught him—

(*A little cry from MRS WHITE her face shows her horror and agony*)

MR WHITE (*vague holding MRS WHITE'S hand*) The machinery caught him—yes—and him the only child—it's hard sir—very hard—

SAMPSON (*subdued*) The Company wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss—

MR WHITE (*staring blankly*) Our—great—loss—!

SAMPSON I was to say further—(*as if apologizing*) I am only their servant—I am only obeying orders—

MR WHITE Our—great—loss—

SAMPSON (*laying an envelope on the table and edging toward the door*)

I was to say the Company disclaim all responsibility but in consideration of your son's services they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation (*Gets to door*)

MR WHITE Our—great—loss——
(*Suddenly with horror*) How—
how much?

SAMPSON (*in the doorway*) Two hundred pounds (*Exit*)

(*MRS WHITE gives a cry The old man takes no heed of her smiles faintly puts out his hands like a sightless man and drops a senseless heap to the floor MRS WHITE stares at him blankly and her hands go out helplessly toward him*)

TABLEAU CURTAIN

SCENE THREE

Night On the table a candle is flickering at its last gasp The room looks neglected MR WHITE is dozing fitfully in the armchair MRS WHITE is in the window peering through the blind MR WHITE starts wakes, looks around him

MR WHITE (*fretfully*) Jenny—
Jenny

don't come home He'll never come home again There's nothing to think about——

MRS WHITE (*in the window*) Yes

MR WHITE Where are you?

MR WHITE Or to talk about.
(*Pause*) Come away from the window you'll get cold

MRS WHITE At the window

MRS WHITE It's colder where *he* is

MR WHITE What are you doing?

MR WHITE Ay—gone for ever——

MRS WHITE Looking up the road

MRS WHITE And taken all our hopes with him——

MR WHITE (*falling back*) What's the use Jenny? What's the use?

MR WHITE And all our *wishes*——

MRS WHITE That's where the cemetery is that's where we've laid him

MRS WHITE Ay and all our——
(*With a sudden cry*) John! (*She comes quickly to him he rises*)

MR WHITE Ay—ay—a week today—what o'clock is it?

MR WHITE Jenny! For God's sake! What's the matter?

MRS WHITE I don't know

MR WHITE We don't take much account of time now Jenny do we?

MRS WHITE (*with dreadful eagerness*) The paw! The monkey's paw!

MRS WHITE Why should we? He

MR WHITE (*bewildered*) Where? Where is it? What's wrong with it?

MRS WHITE I want it! You haven't done away with it?

MRS WHITE We had the first wish granted—why not the second?

MR WHITE I haven't seen it—since—why?

MR WHITE (*hushed*) He's been dead ten days and—Jenny! Jenny! I only knew him by his clothing—if you wasn't allowed to see him then—how could you bear to see him *now*?

MR WHITE (*groping on the mantel piece*) Here! Here it is! What do you want of it? (*He leaves it there*)

MRS WHITE I don't care Bring him back

MRS WHITE Why didn't I think of it? Why didn't *you* think of it?

MR WHITE (*shrinking from the paw*) I daren't touch it!

MR WHITE Think of what?

MRS WHITE (*thrusting it in his hand*) Here! Here! Wish!

MRS WHITE The *other two* wishes!

MR WHITE (*trembling*) Jenny!

MR WHITE (*with horror*) What?

MRS WHITE (*fiercely*) Wish (*She goes on frantically whispering 'Wish'*)

MR WHITE (*tragically*) Wasn't that enough?

MR WHITE (*shuddering but overcome by her insistence*) I—I—wish—my—son—alive again (*He drops it with a cry The candle goes out Utter darkness He sinks into a chair MRS WHITE hurries to the window and draws the blind back She stands in the moonlight Pause*)

MRS WHITE No! We'll have one more (*WHITE crosses MRS WHITE takes the paw and follows him*) Take it Take it quickly And wish——

MR WHITE (*avoiding the paw*) Wish what?

MRS WHITE (*dreadily*) Nothing

MRS WHITE Oh John! John! Wish our boy alive again!

MR WHITE Thank God! Thank God!

MR WHITE Good God! Are you mad?

MRS WHITE Nothing at all Along the whole length of the road not a living thing (*Closes blind*) And nothing nothing nothing left in our lives John

MRS WHITE Take it Take it and wish (*With a paroxysm of grief*) Oh, my boy! My boy!

MR WHITE Get to bed Get to sleep You don't know what you're saying

MR WHITE Except each other, Jenny—and memories

MRS WHITE (*coming back slowly to the fireplace*) We're too old We were only alive in him We can't be gay again We can't feel anything now John but emptiness and darkness (*She sinks into armchair*)

MR WHITE Isn't it for long Jenny There's that to look forward to

MRS WHITE Every minute's long now

MR WHITE (*rising*) I can't bear the darkness!

MRS WHITE It's dreary—dreary

MR WHITE (*goes to dresser*) Where's the candle? (*Finds it and brings it to table*) And the matches? Where are the matches? We mustn't sit in the dark Isn't wholesome (*Lights match the other candle stick is close to him*) There (*Turning with the lighted match toward* MRS WHITE *who is rocking and moaning*) Don't take on so Mother

MRS WHITE I'm a mother no longer

MR WHITE (*lights candle*) There now there now Go on up to bed Go on now—I'm coming

MRS WHITE Whether I'm here or in bed or wherever I am I'm with my boy I'm with—
(*A low single knock at the street door*)

MRS WHITE (*starting*) What's that!

MR WHITE (*mastering his horror*) A rat The house is full of 'em (*A louder single knock she starts up He catches her by the arm*) Stop! What are you going to do?

MRS WHITE (*wildly*) It's my boy! It's Herbert! I forgot it was a mile away! What are you holding me for? I must open the door!
(*The knocking continues in single knocks at irregular intervals constantly growing louder and more insistent*)

MR WHITE (*still holding her*) For God's sake!

MRS WHITE (*struggling*) Let me go!

MR WHITE Don't open the door!
(*He drags her away*)

MRS WHITE Let me go!

MR WHITE Think what you might see!

MRS WHITE (*struggling fiercely*) Do you think I fear the child I bore! Let me go! (*She wrenches herself loose and rushes to the door which she tears open*) I'm coming Herbert! I'm coming!

MR WHITE (*cowering in the extreme corner left front*) Don't see do it! Don't see do it!
(*MRS WHITE is at work on the outdoor door where the knocking still continues She slips the chain slips the lower bolt unlocks the door*)

MR WHITE (*suddenly*) The paw! Where's the monkey's paw? (*He gets on his knees and feels along the floor for it*)

MRS WHITE (*tugging at the top bolt*) John! The top bolt's stuck I can't move it Come and help Quick!

MR WHITE (*wildly groping*) The paw! There's a wish left

(The knocking is now loud and in groups of increasing length between the speeches)

MRS WHITE D ye hear him? John! Your child s knocking!

MR WHITE Where is it? Where did it fall?

MRS WHITE *(tugging desperately at the bolt)* Help! Help! Will you keep your child from his home?

MR WHITE Where did it fall? I can t find it—I can t find——

(The knocking is now tempestuous, and there are blows upon the door as of a body beating against it)

MRS WHITE Herbert! Herbert! My

boy! Wait! Your mother s opening to you! Ah! It s moving! It s moving!

MR WHITE God forbid! *(Finds the paw)* Ah!

MRS WHITE *(slipping the bolt)* Herbert!

MR WHITE *(has raised himself to his knees he holds the paw high)* I wish him dead *(The knocking stops abruptly)* I wish him dead and at peace!

MRS WHITE *(flung the door open simultaneously)* Herb——

(A flood of moonlight Emptiness The old man sways in prayer on his knees The old woman lies half swooning wailing against the door post)

CURTAIN

The Little Man

A FARCICAL MORALITY IN THREE SCENES

BY JOHN GALSWORTHY

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CHARACTERS

THE LITTLE MAN
THE AMERICAN
THE ENGLISHMAN
THE ENGLISHWOMAN
THE GERMAN
THE DUTCH BOY
THE MOTHER
THE BABY
THE WAITER
THE STATION OFFICIAL
THE POLICEMAN
THE PORTER

THE LITTLE MAN

SCENE ONE

Afternoon on the departure platform of an Austrian railway station. At several little tables outside the buffet persons are taking refreshment served by a pale young waiter. On a seat against the wall of the buffet a woman of lowly station is sitting beside two large bundles on one of which she has placed her baby swathed in a black shawl.

WAITER (*approaching a table whereat sit an English traveler and his wife*) Two coffee?

ENGLISHMAN (*paying*) Thanks (*To his wife in an Oxford voice*) Sugar?

ENGLISHWOMAN (*in a Cambridge voice*) One

AMERICAN TRAVELER (*with field glasses and a pocket camera—from another table*) Waiter I'd like to have you get my eggs I've been sitting here quite a while

WAITER Yes sare

GERMAN TRAVELER Kellner bezahlen! (*His voice is like his moustache stiff and brushed up at the ends. His figure also is stiff and his hair a little gray clearly once if not now, a colonel*)

WAITER Komm gleich! (*The baby on the bundle wails. The mother takes it up to soothe it. A young red cheeked Dutchman at the fourth table stops eating and laughs*)

AMERICAN My eggs! Get a wiggle on you!

WAITER Yes sare (*He rapidly recedes*)

(*A LITTLE MAN in a soft hat is seen to the right of tables. He stands a moment looking after the hurrying waiter then seats himself at the fifth table*)

ENGLISHMAN (*looking at his watch*) Ten minutes more

ENGLISHWOMAN Bother!

AMERICAN (*addressing them*) Pears as if they'd a prejudice against eggs here anyway (*The ENGLISH look at him but do not speak*)

GERMAN (*in creditable English*) In these places man can get nothing (*The WAITER comes flying back with a compote for the DUTCH YOUTH who pays*)

GERMAN Kellner bezahlen!

WAITER Eine Krone sechzig (*The GERMAN pays*)

AMERICAN (*rising, and taking out his watch—blandly*) See here! If I don't get my eggs before this watch ticks twenty there'll be another waiter in heaven

WAITER (*flying*) Komm gleich!

AMERICAN (*seeking sympathy*) I'm gettin' kind of mad!

(*The ENGLISHMAN halves his news paper and hands the advertisement half to his wife The BABY wails The MOTHER rocks it The DUTCH YOUTH stops eating and laughs The GERMAN lights a cigarette The LITTLE MAN sits motionless nursing his hat The WAITER comes flying back with the eggs and places them before the AMERICAN*)

AMERICAN (*putting away his watch*) Good! I don't like trouble. How much? (*He pays and eats The WAITER stands a moment at the edge of the platform and passes his hand across his brow The LITTLE MAN eyes him and speaks gently*)

LITTLE MAN Herr Ober! (*The WAITER turns*) Might I have a glass of beer?

WAITER Yes, sare.

LITTLE MAN Thank you very much (*The WAITER goes*)

AMERICAN (*pausing in the deglutition of his eggs—affably*) Pardon me, sir. I'd like to have you tell me why you called that little bit of a feller "Herr Ober." Reckon you would know what that means? Mr. Head Waiter.

LITTLE MAN Yes, yes.

AMERICAN I smile.

LITTLE MAN Oughtn't I to call him that?

GERMAN (*abruptly*) Nein—Kellner.

AMERICAN Why, yes! Just waiter (*The ENGLISHWOMAN looks round her paper for a second The DUTCH YOUTH stops eating and laughs The LITTLE MAN gazes from face to face and nurses his hat*)

LITTLE MAN I didn't want to hurt his feelings.

GERMAN Gott!

AMERICAN In my country we're very democratic—but that's quite a proposition.

ENGLISHMAN (*handling coffee pot to his wife*) More?

ENGLISHWOMAN No, thanks.

GERMAN (*abruptly*) These fellows—if you treat them in this manner at once they take liberties. You see you will not get your beer. (*As he speaks the WAITER returns bringing the LITTLE MAN'S beer then retires*)

AMERICAN That pears to be one up to democracy. (*To the LITTLE MAN*) I judge you go in for brother hood?

LITTLE MAN (*startled*) Oh, no!

AMERICAN I take considerable stock in Leo Tolstoi myself. Grand man—grand souled apparatus. But I guess you've got to pinch those waiters some to make 'em skip. (*To the ENGLISH who have carelessly looked his way for a moment*) You'll appreciate that the way he acted about my eggs. (*The ENGLISH make faint motions with their chins and avert their eyes To the WAITER who is standing at the door of the buffet*) Waiter! Flash of beer—jump now!

WAITER Komm gleich!

barriers and distinctions we've not much use for

GERMAN Cigaretten!

ENGLISHMAN Do you feel a draught?

WAITER Schon! (*He disappears*)

AMERICAN (*affably—to the LITTLE MAN*) Now if I don't get that flash of beer quicker'n you got yours I shall admire

ENGLISHWOMAN (*with a shiver of her shoulder toward the AMERICAN*) I do—rather

GERMAN (*abruptly*) Tolstoi is nothing—nichts! No good! Ha?

GERMAN Wait! You are a young people

AMERICAN (*relishing the approach of argument*) Well that is a matter of temperament Now I'm all for equality See that poor woman there—very humble woman—there she sits among us with her baby Perhaps you'd like to locate her some where else?

AMERICAN That is so there are no flies on us (*To the LITTLE MAN who has been gazing eagerly from face to face*) Say! I'd like to have you give us your sentiments in relation to the duty of man (*The LITTLE MAN fidgets and is about to open his mouth*)

GERMAN (*shrugging*) Tolstoi is sentimentalisch Nietzsche is the true philosopher the only one

AMERICAN For example—is it your opinion that we should kill off the weak and diseased and all that can't jump around?

AMERICAN Well that's quite in the prospectus—very stimulating party—old Nietch—virgin mind But give me Leol (*He turns to the red cheeked YOUTH*) What do you opine sir? I guess by your labels you'll be Dutch Do they read Tolstoi in your country? (*The DUTCH YOUTH laughs*)

GERMAN (*nodding*) Ja ja! That is coming

LITTLE MAN (*looking from face to face*) They might be me (*The DUTCH YOUTH laughs*)

AMERICAN That is a very luminous answer

AMERICAN (*reproving him with a look*) That's true humility Tisn't grammar Now here's a proposition that brings it nearer the bone Would you step out of your way to help them when it was liable to bring you trouble?

GERMAN Tolstoi is nothing Man should himself express He must push—he must be strong

GERMAN Nein nein! That is stupid.

AMERICAN That is so In America we believe in virility we like a man to expand But we believe in brotherhood too We draw the line at niggers but we aspire Social

LITTLE MAN (*eager but wistful*) I'm afraid not Of course one wants to— There was St Francis d'Assisi and St Julien l'Hospitaher and—

AMERICAN Very lofty dispositions
Guess they died of them (*He rises*)
Shake hands sir—my name is—
(*He hands a card*) I am an ice
machine maker (*He shakes the*
LITTLE MAN'S *hand*) I like your
sentiments—I feel kind of broth-
erly (*Catching sight of the* WAITER
appearing in the doorway) Waiter
where to h—ll is that flash of beer?

GERMAN Cigarren!

WAITER Komm gleich! (*He van-
ishes*)

ENGLISHMAN (*consulting watch*)
Train s late

ENGLISHWOMAN Really! Nuisance!
(*A station POLICEMAN very square
and uniformed passes and repasses*

AMERICAN (*resuming his seat—to
the GERMAN*) Now we don't have
so much of that in America. Guess
we feel more to trust in human na-
ture

GERMAN Ah! ha! you will presently
find there is nothing in him but self

LITTLE MAN (*wistfully*) Don't you
believe in human nature?

AMERICAN Very stimulating ques-
tion (*He looks round for opinions*)
(*The DUTCH YOUTH laughs*)

ENGLISHMAN (*holding out his half
of the paper to his wife*) Swap!
(*His wife swaps*)

GERMAN In human nature I believe
so far as I can see him—no more

AMERICAN Now that 'pears to me
kind o' blasphemy I believe in hero-
ism I opine there's not one of us

settin' around here that's not a hero
—give him the occasion

LITTLE MAN Oh! Do you believe
that?

AMERICAN Well! I judge a hero is
just a person that'll help another at
the expense of himself. Take that
poor woman there. Well now she's
a heroine I guess. She would die for
her baby any old time

GERMAN Animals will die for their
babies. That is nothing

AMERICAN I carry it further. I pos-
tulate we would all die for that baby
if a locomotive was to trundle up
right here and try to handle it (*To
the GERMAN*) I guess you don't
know how good you are (*As the
GERMAN is twisting up the ends of
his moustache—to the ENGLISH
WOMAN*) I should like to have you
express an opinion, ma'am

ENGLISHWOMAN I beg your pardon

AMERICAN The English are very hu-
manitarian. They have a very high
sense of duty. So have the Germans.
So have the Americans (*To the
DUTCH YOUTH*) I judge even in your
little country they have that. This is
an epoch of equality and high-toned
ideals (*To the LITTLE MAN*) What
is your nationality, sir?

LITTLE MAN I'm afraid I'm nothing
particular. My father was half Eng-
lish and half American, and my
mother half German and half
Dutch

AMERICAN My! That's a bit streaky
any old way (*The POLICEMAN
passes again*) Now I don't believe
we've much use any more for those

gentlemen in buttons We've grown kind of mild—we don't think of self as we used to do
(*The WAITER has appeared in the doorway*)

GERMAN (*in a voice of thunder*)
Cigarren! Donnerwetter!

AMERICAN (*shaking his fist at the vanishing WAITER*) That flash of beer!

WAITER Komm gleich!

AMERICAN A little more and he will join George Washington! I was about to remark when he intruded In this year of grace 1913 the kingdom of Christ is quite a going concern We are mighty near to universal brotherhood The colonel here (*he indicates the GERMAN*) is a man of blood and iron but give him an opportunity to be magnanimous and he'll be right there Oh, sir! yep!

(*The GERMAN with a profound mixture of pleasure and cynicism, brushes up the ends of his moustache*)

LITTLE MAN I wonder One wants to but somehow— (*He shakes his head*)

AMERICAN You seem kind of skeery about that You've had experience maybe I'm an optimist—I think we're bound to make the devil hum in the near future I opine we shall occasion a good deal of trouble to that old party There's about to be a holocaust of selfish interests The colonel there with old man Nietzsche—he won't know himself There's going to be a very sacred opportunity
(*As he speaks, the voice of a RAIL*

WAY OFFICIAL is heard in the distance calling out in German It approaches and the words become audible)

GERMAN (*startled*) Der Teufel! (*He gets up and seizes the bag beside him*)

(*The STATION OFFICIAL has appeared he stands for a moment casting his commands at the seated group The DUTCH YOUTH also rises and takes his coat and hat The OFFICIAL turns on his heel and retires still issuing directions*)

ENGLISHMAN What does he say?

GERMAN Our train has come in de order platform only one minute we haf

(*ALL have risen in a flutter*)

AMERICAN Now that's very provoking I won't get that flash of beer
(*There is a general scurry to gather coats and hats and wraps during which the lowly WOMAN is seen making desperate attempts to deal with her baby and the two large bundles Quite defeated she suddenly puts all down wrings her hands and cries out Herr Jesus! Hilfe! The flying procession turn their heads at that strange cry*)

AMERICAN What's that? Help? (*He continues to run*)

(*The LITTLE MAN spins round rushes back, picks up baby and bundle on which it was seated*)

LITTLE MAN Come along good woman come along!

(*The WOMAN picks up the other bundle and they run The WAITER, appearing in the doorway with the bottle of beer watches with his tired smile*)

CURTAIN

SCENE TWO

A second class compartment of a corridor carriage in motion In it are seated the ENGLISHMAN and his WIFE opposite each other at the corridor end she with her face to the engine he with his back Both are somewhat protected from the rest of the travelers by newspapers Next to her sits the GERMAN and opposite him sits the AMERICAN next the AMERICAN in one window corner is seated the DUTCH YOUTH the other window corner is taken by the GERMAN'S bag The silence is only broken by the slight rushing noise of the train's progression and the crackling of the English newspapers

AMERICAN (*turning to the DUTCH YOUTH*) Guess I'd like that window raised it's kind of chilly after that old run they gave us

(*The DUTCH YOUTH laughs and goes through the motions of raising the window The ENGLISH regard the operation with uneasy irritation The GERMAN opens his bag which reposes on the corner seat next him, and takes out a book*)

AMERICAN The Germans are great readers Very stimulating practice I read most anything myself! (*The GERMAN holds up the book so that the title may be read*) Don Quixote—fine book We Americans take considerable stock in old man Quixote Bit of a wild cat—but we don't laugh at him

GERMAN He is dead Dead as a sheep A good thing too

AMERICAN In America we have still quite an amount of chivalry

GERMAN Chivalry is nothing—sentimentalisch In modern days—no good A man must push he must pull

AMERICAN So you say But I judge your form of chivalry is sacrifice to

the state We allow more freedom to the individual soul Where there's something little and weak we feel it kind of noble to give up to it That way we feel elevated

(*As he speaks there is seen in the corridor doorway the LITTLE MAN with the WOMAN'S BABY still on his arm and the bundle held in the other hand He peers in anxiously The ENGLISH acutely conscious try to dissociate themselves from his presence with their papers The DUTCH YOUTH laughs*)

GERMAN Ach! So!

AMERICAN Dear me!

LITTLE MAN Is there room? I can't find a seat

AMERICAN Why yes! There's a seat for one

LITTLE MAN (*depositing bundle outside and heaving BABY*) May I?

AMERICAN Come right in! (*The GERMAN sulkily moves his bag The LITTLE MAN comes in and seats himself gingerly*)

AMERICAN Where's the mother?

LITTLE MAN (*ruefully*) Afraid she got left behind
(*The DUTCH YOUTH laughs The ENGLISH unconsciously emerge from their newspapers*)

AMERICAN My! That would appear to be quite a domestic incident
(*The ENGLISHMAN suddenly utters a profound Ha Ha! and disappears behind his paper And that paper and the one opposite are seen to shake and little squirls and squeaks emerge*)

GERMAN And you haf got her bundle and her baby Hal (*He cackles dryly*)

AMERICAN (*gravely*) I smile I guess Providence has played it pretty low down on you Its sure acted real mean

(*The BABY wails and the LITTLE MAN jigs it with a sort of gentle desperation looking apologetically from face to face His wistful glance renews the fire of merriment wherever it alights The AMERICAN alone preserves a gravity which seems incapable of being broken*)

AMERICAN Maybe you'd better get off right smart and restore that baby There's nothing can act madder than a mother

LITTLE MAN Poor thing yes! What she must be suffering!

(*A gale of laughter shakes the carriage The ENGLISH for a moment drop their papers the better to indulge The LITTLE MAN smiles a wintry smile*)

AMERICAN (*in a lull*) How did it eventuate?

LITTLE MAN We got there just as

the train was going to start and I jumped thinking I could help her up But it moved too quickly and—and left her
(*The gale of laughter blows up again*)

AMERICAN Guess I'd have thrown the baby out to her

LITTLE MAN I was afraid the poor little thing might break
(*The BABY wails the LITTLE MAN heaves at the gale of laughter blows*)

AMERICAN (*gravely*) It's highly entertaining—not for the baby What kind of an old baby is it anyway?
(*He sniffs*) I judge it's a bit—nuffy

LITTLE MAN Afraid I've hardly looked at it yet

AMERICAN Which end up is it?

LITTLE MAN Oh! I think the right end Yes yes it is

AMERICAN Well that's something Maybe you should hold it out of the window a bit Very excitable things babies!

ENGLISHWOMAN (*galvanized*) No no!

ENGLISHMAN (*touching her knee*) My dear!

AMERICAN You are right ma'am I opine there's a draught out there This baby is precious We've all of us got stock in this baby in a manner of speaking This is a little bit of universal brotherhood Is it a woman baby?

LITTLE MAN I—I can only see the top of its head

AMERICAN You cant always tell from that It looks kind of over wrapped up Maybe it had better be unbound

GERMAN Nein nein nein!

AMERICAN I think you are very likely right colonel It might be a pity to unbind that baby I guess the lady should be consulted in this matter

ENGLISHWOMAN Yes yes of course—I—

ENGLISHMAN (*touching her*) Let it be! Little beggar seems all right

AMERICAN That would seem only known to Providence at this moment I judge it might be due to humanity to look at its face

LITTLE MAN (*gladly*) Its sucking my finger There there—nice little thing—there!

AMERICAN I would surmise in your leisure moments you have created babies sir?

LITTLE MAN Oh! no—indeed no

AMERICAN Dear me!—That is a loss (*Addressing himself to the carriage at large*) I think we may esteem ourselves fortunate to have this little stranger right here with us Demonstrates what a hold the little and weak have upon us nowa days The colonel here—a man of blood and iron—there he sits quite calm next door to it (*He sniffs*) Now this baby is rather chastening—that is a sign of grace in the colonel—that is true heroism

LITTLE MAN (*family*) I—I can see its face a little now (*All bend forward*)

AMERICAN What sort of a physiognomy has it anyway?

LITTLE MAN (*still family*) I dont see anything but—but spots

GERMAN Oh! Ha! Pfu! (*The DUTCH YOUTH laughs*)

AMERICAN I am told that is not uncommon amongst babies Perhaps we could have you inform us ma am

ENGLISHWOMAN Yes of course—only—what sort of—

LITTLE MAN They seem all over its— (*At the slight recoil of everyone*) I feel sure its—it is quite a good baby underneath

AMERICAN That will be rather difficult to come at I m just a bit sensitive Ive very little use for affections of the epidermis

GERMAN Pfu! (*He has edged away as far as he can get and is lighting a big cigar The DUTCH YOUTH draws his legs back*)

AMERICAN (*also taking out a cigar*) I guess it would be well to fumigate this carriage Does it suffer do you think?

LITTLE MAN (*peering*) Really I dont—I m not sure—I know so little about babies I think it would have a nice expression—if—if it showed

AMERICAN Is it kind of boiled looking?

LITTLE MAN Yes—yes it is

AMERICAN (*looking gravely round*) I judge this baby has the measles

(The GERMAN screws himself spasmodically against the arm of the ENGLISHWOMAN'S seat)

arm through hers raises her and almost pushes her through the doorway She goes still looking back)

ENGLISHWOMAN Poor little thing! Shall I——? *(She half rises)*

ENGLISHMAN *(touching her)* No no— Dash it!

AMERICAN I honor your emotion ma'am It does credit to us all But I sympathize with your husband too The measles is a very important pestilence in connection with a grown woman

LITTLE MAN It likes my finger awfully Really it's rather a sweet baby

AMERICAN *(snuffing)* Well that would appear to be quite a question About them spots now? Are they rosy?

LITTLE MAN No o, they're dark almost black

GERMAN Gott! Typhus! *(He bounds up on to the arm of the ENGLISHWOMAN'S seat)*

AMERICAN Typhus! That's quite an indisposition!

(The DUTCH YOUTH rises suddenly and bolts out into the corridor He is followed by the GERMAN puffing clouds of smoke The ENGLISH and AMERICAN sit a moment longer without speaking The ENGLISH WOMAN'S face is turned with a curious expression—half pity half fear—towards the LITTLE MAN Then the ENGLISHMAN gets up)

ENGLISHMAN Bit stuffy for you here dear isn't it? *(He puts his*

AMERICAN (gravely) There's nothing I admire more than courage Guess I'll go and smoke in the corridor (As he goes out the LITTLE MAN looks very wistfully after him Screwing up his mouth and nose he holds the BABY away from him and wavers then rising he puts it on the seat opposite and goes through the motions of letting down the window Having done so he looks at the BABY who has begun to wail Suddenly he raises his hands and clasps them like a child praying Since however the BABY does not stop wailing he hovers over it in indecision then picking it up sits down again to dandle it with his face turned toward the open window Finding that it still wails he begins to sing to it in a cracked little voice It is charmed at once While he is singing the AMERICAN appears in the corridor Letting down the passage window he stands there in the doorway with the draught blowing his hair and the smoke of his cigar all about him The LITTLE MAN stops singing and shifts the shawl higher to protect the BABY'S head from the draught)

AMERICAN (gravely) This is the most sublime spectacle I have ever envisaged There ought to be a record of this (The LITTLE MAN looks at him wondering) You are typical, sir of the sentiments of modern Christianity You illustrate the deepest feelings in the heart of every man (The LITTLE MAN rises with the BABY and a movement of approach) Guess I'm wanted in the dining car (He vanishes) (The LITTLE MAN sits down again,

but back to the engine away from window patiently jogging the BABY the draught and looks out of the on his knee)

CURTAIN

SCENE THREE

An arrival platform The LITTLE MAN with the BABY and the bundle is standing disconsolate while travellers pass and luggage is being carried by A STATION OFFICIAL accompanied by a POLICEMAN appears from a door way behind him

OFFICIAL (*consulting telegram in his hand*) Das ist der Herr (*They advance to the LITTLE MAN*)

LITTLE MAN No

OFFICIAL Gut You are rested

OFFICIAL Sie haben einen Buben gestohlen?

LITTLE MAN I only took it for the poor woman I m not a thief—I m—I m——

LITTLE MAN I only speak English and American

OFFICIAL (*shaking head*) Verstehe nicht
(*The LITTLE MAN tries to tear his hair The disturbed BABY wails*)

OFFICIAL Dies ist nicht Ihr Bube?
(*He touches the BABY*)

LITTLE MAN (*dandling it as best he can*) There there—poor poor!

LITTLE MAN (*shaking his head*) Take care—it s ill (*The man does not understand*) Ill—the baby——

OFFICIAL Halt still! You are rested It is all right

OFFICIAL (*shaking his head*) Verstehe nicht Dis is nod your baby? No?

LITTLE MAN Where is the mother?

LITTLE MAN (*shaking his head violently*) No it is not No

OFFICIAL She comm by next dram Das telegram say Halt einen Herrn mit schwarzem Buben and schwarzem Gepack Rest gentleman mit black baby und black—pag
(*The LITTLE MAN turns up his eyes to heaven*)

OFFICIAL (*tapping the telegram*) Gut! You are rested (*He signs to the POLICEMAN who takes the LITTLE MAN S arm*)

LITTLE MAN Why? I don t want the poor baby

OFFICIAL Komm mit us (*They take the LITTLE MAN toward the door from which they have come A voice stops them*)

OFFICIAL (*lifting the bundle*) Dies ist nicht Ihr Gepack—pag?

AMERICAN (*speaking from as far away as may be*) Just a moment! (*The OFFICIAL stops the LITTLE MAN also stops and sits down on a bench against the wall The POLICE MAN stands stolidly beside him The AMERICAN approaches a step or two beckoning the OFFICIAL goes up to him*)

AMERICAN Guess you've got an angel from heaven there! What's the gentleman in buttons for?

OFFICIAL Was ist das?

AMERICAN Is there anybody here that can understand American?

OFFICIAL Verstehe nicht

AMERICAN Well just watch my gestures I was saying (*he points to the LITTLE MAN then makes gestures of flying*) you have an angel from heaven there You have there a man in whom Gawd (*he points upward*) takes quite an amount of stock You have no call to arrest him (*He makes the gesture of arrest*) No sir Providence has acted pretty mean loading off that baby on him (*He makes the motion of dandling*) The little man has a heart of gold (*He points to his heart and takes out a gold coin*)

OFFICIAL (*thinking he is about to be bribed*) Aber das ist zu viel!

AMERICAN Now don't rattle me! (*Pointing to the LITTLE MAN*) Man (*pointing to his heart*) Herz (*pointing to the coin*) von Gold This is a flower of the field—he don't want no gentleman in buttons to pluck him up (*A little crowd is gathering including the TWO ENGLISH the GERMAN and the DUTCH YOUTH*)

OFFICIAL Verstehe absolut nichts (*He taps the telegram*) Ich muss mein duty do

AMERICAN But I'm telling you This is a white man This is probably the whitest man on Gawd's earth

OFFICIAL Das macht nichts—gut or no gut I muss mein duty do (*He turns to go toward the LITTLE MAN*)

AMERICAN Oh! Very well arrest him do your duty This baby has typhus (*At the word typhus the OFFICIAL stops*)

AMERICAN (*making gestures*) First class typhus black typhus schwarzen typhus Now you have it I'm kind o' sorry for you and the gentleman in buttons Do your duty!

OFFICIAL Typhus? Der Bub—die baby hat typhus?

AMERICAN I'm telling you

OFFICIAL Gott im Himmell

AMERICAN (*spotting the GERMAN in the little throng*) Here's a gentleman will corroborate me

OFFICIAL (*much disturbed and signing to the POLICEMAN to stand clear*) Typhus! Aber das ist grass hoch!

AMERICAN I kind o' thought you'd feel like that

OFFICIAL Die Sanitätsmaschine! Gleich!

(*A PORTER goes to get it From either side the broken half moon of persons stand gazing at the LITTLE*)

MAN *who sits unhappily dandling the BABY in the center*)

DUTCH YOUTH *laughs* The OFFICIAL *is muttering greatly incensed*)

OFFICIAL (*raising his hands*) Was zu thun?

AMERICAN What does that body snatcher say?

AMERICAN Guess you'd better iso late the baby
(*A silence during which the LITTLE MAN is heard faintly whistling and clucking to the BABY*)

GERMAN He say this man use the baby to save himself from arrest Very smart—he say

OFFICIAL (*referring once more to his telegram*) Rest gentleman mit black baby (*Shaking his head*) Wir must de gentleman hold (*To the GERMAN*) Bitte mein Herr sagen Sie ihm den Buben zu nieder setzen (*He makes the gesture of deposit*)

AMERICAN I judge you do him an injustice (*Showing off the LITTLE MAN with a sweep of his arm*) This is a white man He's got a black baby and he won't leave it in the lurch Guess we would all act noble that way give us the chance (*The LITTLE MAN rises holding out the BABY and advances a step or two The half moon at once gives increasing its size the AMERICAN climbs on to a higher trunk The LITTLE MAN retires and again sits down*)

GERMAN (*to the LITTLE MAN*) He say Put down the baby
(*The LITTLE MAN shakes his head and continues to dandle the BABY*)

AMERICAN (*addressing the OFFICIAL*) Guess you'd better go out of business and wait for the mother

OFFICIAL You must
(*The LITTLE MAN glowers in silence*)

ENGLISHMAN (*in background—muttering*) Good man!

OFFICIAL (*stamping his foot*) Die Mutter sall rested be for taking out baby mit typhus Ha! (*To the LITTLE MAN*) Put ze baby down! (*The LITTLE MAN smiles*) Do you ear?

GERMAN His spirit ever denies

OFFICIAL (*again making his gesture*) Aber er muss! (*The LITTLE MAN makes a face at him*) Sag Ihm Instantly put down baby and komm mit us
(*The BABY wails*)

AMERICAN (*addressing the OFFICIAL*) Now, see here Fears to me you don't suspicion just how beautiful this is Here we have a man giving his life for that old baby that's got no claim on him This is not a baby of his own making No sir this is a very Christ like proposition in the gentleman

LITTLE MAN Leave the poor ill baby here alone? Be—be—be d——d to you!

OFFICIAL Put ze baby down or ich will gommmand someone it to do

AMERICAN (*jumping on to a trunk—with enthusiasm*) Bully!
(*The ENGLISH clap their hands, the*

AMERICAN That will be very interesting to watch

OFFICIAL (*to POLICEMAN*) Dake it vrom him
(*The POLICEMAN mutters but does not*)

AMERICAN (*to the GERMAN*) Guess I lost that

GERMAN He say he is not his officier

AMERICAN That just tickles me to death

OFFICIAL (*looking round*) Vill no body dake ze Bub?

ENGLISHWOMAN (*moving a step—famtly*) Yes—I—

ENGLISHMAN (*grasping her arm*) By Jove! Will you!

OFFICIAL (*gathering himself for a great effort to take the BABY, and advancing two steps*) Zen I gom mand you— (*He stops and his voice dies away*) Zit dere!

AMERICAN My! That's wonderful! What a man this is! What a sublime sense of duty!

(*The DUTCH YOUTH laughs The OFFICIAL turns on him but as he does so the MOTHER of the BABY is seen hurrying*)

MOTHER Ach! Ach! Mei Bubi! (*Her face is illumined she is about to rush to the LITTLE MAN*)

OFFICIAL (*to the POLICEMAN*) Nimm die Frau!
(*The POLICEMAN catches hold of the WOMAN*)

OFFICIAL (*to the frightened WOMAN*) Warum haben Sie einen Buben mit Typhus mit ausgebracht?

AMERICAN (*eagerly from his perch*) What was that? I don't want to miss any

GERMAN He say Why did you a baby with typhus with you bring out?

AMERICAN Well that's quite a question (*He takes out the field glasses slung around him and adjusts them on the BABY*)

MOTHER (*bewildered*) Mei Bubi—Typhus—aber Typhus? (*She shakes her head violently*) Nein nein nein! Typhus!

OFFICIAL Er hat Typhus

MOTHER (*shaking her head*) Nein nein nein!

AMERICAN (*looking through his glasses*) Guess she's kind of right! I judge the typhus is where the baby's slobbered on the shawl and it's come off on him
(*The DUTCH YOUTH laughs*)

OFFICIAL (*turning on him furiously*) Er hat Typhus

AMERICAN Now that's where you slop over! Come right here
(*The OFFICIAL mounts, and looks through the glasses*)

AMERICAN (*to the LITTLE MAN*) Skin out the baby's leg! If we don't locate spots on that, it'll be good enough for me
(*The LITTLE MAN fumbles out the BABY's little white foot*)

MOTHER Mei Bub! (*She tries to break away*)

AMERICAN White as a banana (*To the OFFICIAL—affably*) Guess you've made kind of a fool of us with your old typhus

OFFICIAL Lass die Frau! (*The POLICEMAN lets her go and she rushes to her BABY*)

MOTHER Mei Bub! (*The BABY exchanging the warmth of the LITTLE MAN for the momentary chill of its MOTHER wails*)

OFFICIAL (*descending and beckoning to the POLICEMAN*) Sie wollen den Herrn accusiren? (*The POLICEMAN takes the LITTLE MAN'S arm*)

AMERICAN What's that? They goin to pinch him after all? (*The MOTHER still hugging her BABY who has stopped crying gazes at the LITTLE MAN who sits dazedly looking up Suddenly she drops on her knees and with her free hand lyts his booted foot and kisses it*)

AMERICAN (*waving his hat*) Ral Ral (*He descends swiftly goes up to the LITTLE MAN whose arm the POLICEMAN has dropped and takes his hand*) Brother I am proud to know you This is one of the greatest moments I have ever experienced (*Displaying the LITTLE MAN to the assembled company*) I think I sense the situation when I say that

we all esteem it an honor to breathe the rather inferior atmosphere of this station here along with our little friend I guess we shall all go home and treasure the memory of his face as the whitest thing in our museum of recollections And perhaps this good woman will also go home and wash the face of our little brother here I am inspired with a new faith in mankind Ladies and gentlemen I wish to present to you a sure enough saint—only wants a halo to be transfigured (*To the LITTLE MAN*) Stand right up

(*The LITTLE MAN stands up bewildered They come about him The OFFICIAL bows to him the POLICEMAN salutes him The DUTCH YOUTH shakes his head and laughs The GERMAN draws himself up very straight and bows quickly twice The ENGLISHMAN and his WIFE approach at least two steps then thinking better of it turn to each other and recede The MOTHER kisses his hand The PORTER returning with the Sanitatsmaschine turns it on from behind and its pinkish shower goldened by a ray of sunlight falls around the LITTLE MAN'S head transfiguring it as he stands with eyes upraised to see whence the portent comes*)

AMERICAN (*rushing forward and dropping on his knees*) Hold on just a minute! Guess I'll take a snapshot of the miracle (*He adjusts his pocket camera*) This ought to look bully!

CURTAIN

Riders to the Sea

BY J M SYNGE

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CHARACTERS

MAURYA, *an old woman*

BARTLEY *her son*

CATHLEEN *her daughter*

NORA *a younger daughter*

MEN AND WOMEN

RIDERS TO THE SEA

SCENE—An Island off the West of Ireland

Cottage kitchen with nets oil skins spinning wheel some new boards standing by the wall etc CATHLEEN *a girl of about twenty finishes kneading cake and puts it down in the pot oven by the fire then wipes her hands and begins to spin at the wheel* NORA *a young girl puts her head in at the door*

NORA (*in a low voice*) Where is she?

(*The door which NORA half closed is blown open by a gust of wind*)

CATHLEEN She's lying down God help her and may be sleeping if she's able

(*NORA comes in softly and takes a bundle from under her shawl*)

CATHLEEN (*looking out anxiously*) Did you ask him would he stop Bartley going this day with the horses to the Galway fair?

CATHLEEN (*spinning the wheel rapidly*) What is it you have?

NORA I won't stop him says he but let you not be afraid Herself does be saying prayers half through the night and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute says he with no son living

NORA The young priest is after bringing them It's a shirt and a plain stocking were got off a drowned man in Donegal

(*CATHLEEN stops her wheel with a sudden movement and leans out to listen*)

CATHLEEN Is the sea bad by the white rocks Nora?

NORA We're to find out if it's Michael's they are some time herself will be down looking by the sea

NORA Middling bad God help us There's a great roaring in the west and it's worse it'll be getting when the tides turned to the wind (*She goes over to the table with the bundle*) Shall I open it now?

CATHLEEN How would they be Michael's Nora? How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

CATHLEEN Maybe she'd wake up on us and come in before we'd done (*Coming to the table*) It's a long time we'll be and the two of us crying

NORA The young priest says he's known the like of it If it's Michael's they are says he you can tell her self he's got a clean burial by the grace of God and if they're not his let no one say a word about them for she'll be getting her death says he "with crying and lamenting"

NORA (*goes to the inner door and listens*) She's moving about on the bed She'll be coming in a minute

CATHLEEN Give me the ladder, and I'll put them up in the turf loft,

the way she won't know of them at all and maybe when the tide turns she'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east (*They put the ladder against the gable of the chimney CATHLEEN goes up a few steps and hides the bundle in the turf loft MAURYA comes from the inner room*)

MAURYA (*looking up at CATHLEEN and speaking querulously*) Isn't it turf enough you have for this day and evening?

CATHLEEN There's a cake baking at the fire for a short space (*throwing down the turf*) and BARTLEY will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara (*NORA picks up the turf and puts it round the pot oven*)

MAURYA (*sitting down on a stool at the fire*) He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west He won't go this day for the young priest will stop him surely

NORA He'll not stop him Mother and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Pheety and Colum Shawn saying he would go

MAURYA Where is he itself?

NORA He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week and I'm thinking it won't be long till he's here now for the tide's turning at the green head and the hooker's tacking from the east

CATHLEEN I hear some one passing the big stones

NORA (*looking out*) He's coming now and he in a hurry

BARTLEY (*comes in and looks round the room Speaking sadly and quietly*) Where is the bit of new rope Cathleen was bought in Connemara?

CATHLEEN (*coming down*) Give it to him Nora it's on a nail by the white boards I hung it up this morning for the pig with the black feet was eating it

NORA (*giving him a rope*) Is that it Bartley?

MAURYA You'd do right to leave that rope Bartley hanging by the boards (*BARTLEY takes the rope*) It will be wanting in this place I'm telling you if Michael is washed up tomorrow morning or the next morning or any morning in the week for it's a deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God

BARTLEY (*beginning to work with the rope*) I've no halter the way I can ride down on the mare and I must go now quickly This is the one boat going for two weeks or beyond it and the fair will be a good fair for horses I heard them saying be low

MAURYA It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara (*She looks round at the boards*)

BARTLEY How would it be washed up and we after looking each day for nine days and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

MAURYA If it wasn't found itself,

that wind is raising the sea and there was a star up against the moon and it rising in the night If it was a hundred horses or a thousand horses you had itself what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

BARTLEY (*working at the halter to CATHLEEN*) Let you go down each day and see the sheep aren't jumping in on the rye and if the jobber comes you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going

MAURYA How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?

BARTLEY (*to CATHLEEN*) If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon let you and Nora get up weed enough for another cock for the kelp It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work

MAURYA It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drowned with the rest What way will I live and the girls with me and I an old woman looking for the grave? (*Bartley lays down the halter takes off his old coat and puts on a newer one of the same flannel*)

BARTLEY (*to NORA*) Is she coming to the pier?

NORA (*looking out*) She's passing the green head and letting fall her sails

BARTLEY (*getting his purse and to bacco*) I'll have half an hour to go down and you'll see me coming again in two days or in three days or maybe in four days if the wind is bad.

MAURYA (*turning round to the fire and putting her shawl over her head*) Isn't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman and she holding him from the sea?

CATHLEEN It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

BARTLEY (*taking the halter*) I must go now quickly I'll ride down on the red mare and the gray pony'll run behind me The blessing of God on you (*He goes out*)

MAURYA (*crying out as he is in the door*) He's gone now God spare us and we'll not see him again He's gone now and when the black night is falling I'll have no son left me in the world

CATHLEEN Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on every one in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him and a hard word in his ear? (*MAURYA takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round*)

NORA (*turning towards her*) You're taking away the turf from the cake

CATHLEEN (*crying out*) The Son of God forgive us Nora, we're after forgetting his bit of bread (*She comes over to the fire*)

NORA And it's destroyed he'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up

CATHLEEN (*turning the cake out of the oven*) It's destroyed he'll be surely There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking for ever
(MAURYA *sways herself on her stool*)

CATHLEEN (*cutting off some of the bread and rolling it in a cloth to Maurya*) Let you go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing You'll see him then and the dark world will be broken and you can say God speed you the way he'll be easy in his mind

MAURYA (*taking the bread*) Will I be in it as soon as himself?

CATHLEEN If you go now quickly

MAURYA (*standing up unsteadily*) It's hard set I am to walk

CATHLEEN (*looking at her anxiously*) Give her the stick NORA or maybe she'll slip on the big stones

NORA What stick?

CATHLEEN The stick Michael brought from Connemara

MAURYA (*taking a stick NORA gives her*) In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old (*She goes out slowly NORA goes over to the ladder*)

CATHLEEN Wait NORA maybe she'd turn back quickly She's that sorry God help her you wouldn't know the thing she'd do

NORA Is she gone round by the bush?

CATHLEEN (*looking out*) She's gone now Throw it down quickly for the Lord knows when she'll be out of it again

NORA (*getting the bundle from the loft*) The young priest said he'd be passing tomorrow and we might go down and speak to him below if it's Michael's they are surely

CATHLEEN (*taking the bundle*) Did he say what way they were found?

NORA (*coming down*) There were two men says he and they rowing round with poteen before the cocks crowed and the oar of one of them caught the body and they passing the black cliffs of the north

CATHLEEN (*trying to open the bundle*) Give me a knife NORA the strings perished with the salt water and there's a black knot on it you wouldn't loosen in a week

NORA (*giving her a knife*) I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal

CATHLEEN (*cutting the string*) It is surely There was a man in here a while ago—the man sold us that knife—and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond it would be seven days you'd be in Donegal

NORA And what time would a man take and he floating?
(CATHLEEN *opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking They look at them eagerly*)

CATHLEEN (*in a low voice*) The Lord spare us Nora! isn't it a queer

hard thing to say if it's his they are surely?

NORA I'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put the one flannel on the other (*She looks through some clothes hanging in the corner*) It's not with them Cathleen and where will it be?

CATHLEEN I'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it (*Pointing to the corner*) There's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff Give me that and it will do (*NORA brings it to her and they compare the flannel*)

CATHLEEN It's the same stuff Nora but if it is itself aren't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway and isn't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?

NORA (*who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches crying out*) It's Michael Cathleen it's Michael God spare his soul and what will herself say when she hears this story and Bartley on the sea?

CATHLEEN (*taking the stocking*) It's a plain stocking

NORA It's the second one of the third pair I knitted and I put up three score stitches and I dropped four of them

CATHLEEN (*counts the stitches*) It's that number is in it (*Crying out*) Ah Nora isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

NORA (*swinging herself round and throwing out her arms on the clothes*) And isn't it a pitiful thing

when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

CATHLEEN (*after an instant*) Tell me is herself coming Nora? I hear a little sound on the path

NORA (*looking out*) She is Cathleen She's coming up to the door

CATHLEEN Put these things away before she'll come in Maybe it's easier she'll be after giving her blessing to Bartley and we won't let on we've heard anything the time he's on the sea

NORA (*helping CATHLEEN to close the bundle*) We'll put them here in the corner (*They put them into a hole in the chimney corner*) CATHLEEN goes back to the spinning wheel)

NORA Will she see it was crying I was?

CATHLEEN Keep your back to the door the way the light'll not be on you

(*NORA sits down at the chimney corner with her back to the door MAURYA comes in very slowly with out looking at the girls and goes over to her stool at the other side of the fire The cloth with the bread is still in her hand The girls look at each other and NORA points to the bundle of bread*)

CATHLEEN (*after spinning for a moment*) You didn't give him his bit of bread?

(*MAURYA begins to keen softly without turning round*)

CATHLEEN Did you see him riding down?

(*MAURYA goes on keening*)

CATHLEEN (*a little impatiently*)

God forgive you isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley I'm saying to you

MAURYA (*with a weak voice*) My heart's broken from this day

CATHLEEN (*as before*) Did you see Bartley?

MAURYA I seen the fearfulest thing

CATHLEEN (*leaves her wheel and looks out*) God forgive you he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him

MAURYA (*starts so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair With a frightened voice*) The gray pony behind him

CATHLEEN (*coming to the fire*) What is it ails you at all?

MAURYA (*speaking very slowly*) I've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with the child in his arms

CATHLEEN and NORA Uah (*They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire*)

NORA Tell us what it is you seen

MAURYA I went down to the spring well and I stood there saying a prayer to myself Then Bartley came along and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him (*She puts up her hands as if to hide something from her eyes*) The Son of God spare us, Nora!

CATHLEEN What is it you seen?

MAURYA I seen Michael himself

CATHLEEN (*speaking softly*) You did not Mother it wasn't Michael you seen for his body is after being found in the far north and he's got a clean burial by the grace of God

MAURYA (*a little defiantly*) I'm after seeing him this day and he riding and galloping Bartley came first on the red mare and I tried to say God speed you but something choked the words in my throat He went by quickly and the blessing of God on you says he and I could say nothing I looked up then and I crying at the gray pony and there was Michael upon it—with fine clothes on him and new shoes on his feet

CATHLEEN (*begins to keen*) It's destroyed we are from this day It's destroyed surely

NORA Didn't the young priest say the Almighty God wouldn't leave her destitute with no son living?

MAURYA (*in a low voice but clearly*) It's little the like of him knows of the sea Bartley will be lost now and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards for I won't live after them I've had a husband and a husband's father and six sons in this house—six fine men though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming to the world—and some of them were found and some of them were not found but they're gone now the lot of them There were Stephen and Shawn were lost in the great wind and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth and carried up the two of them on the one plank and in by that door (*She pauses for a moment the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half open behind them*)

NORA (*in a whisper*) Did you hear that Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the north east?

CATHLEEN (*in a whisper*) There's some one after crying out by the seashore

MAURYA (*continues without hearing anything*) There was Sheamus and his father and his own father again were lost in a dark night and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. There was Patch after was drowned out of a curagh that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley and he a baby lying on my two knees and I seen two women and three women and four women coming in and they crossing themselves and not saying a word. I looked out then and there were men coming after them and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail and water dripping out of it—it was a dry day, Nora—and leaving a track to the door. (*She pauses again with her hand stretched out towards the door. It opens softly and old women begin to come in crossing themselves on the thresh old and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads*)

MAURYA (*half in a dream to CATHLEEN*) Is it Patch or Michael or what is it at all?

CATHLEEN Michael is after being found in the far north and when he is found there how could he be here in this place?

MAURYA There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea, and what way would they know if it was Michael they had or another man like him for when a man is nine days in the sea, and the wind blowing, it's hard set his own

mother would be to say what man was it

CATHLEEN It's Michael God spare him for they're after sending us a bit of his clothes from the far north. (*She reaches out and hands MAURYA the clothes that belonged to MICHAEL. MAURYA stands up slowly and takes them in her hands. NORA looks out*)

NORA They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones

CATHLEEN (*in a whisper to the women who have come in*) Is it Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN It is surely God rest his soul. (*Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of BARTLEY laid on a plank with a bit of a sail over it and lay it on the table*)

CATHLEEN (*to the women as they are doing so*) What way was he drowned?

ONE OF THE WOMEN The gray pony knocked him into the sea and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks. (*MAURYA has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. CATHLEEN and NORA kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door*)

MAURYA (*raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her*) They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind

breaks from the south and you can hear the surf is in the east and the surf is in the west making a great stir with the two noises and they hitting one on the other I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening (To NORA) Give me the Holy Water Nora there's a small sup still on the dresser
(NORA gives it to her)

MAURYA (*drops MICHAEL'S clothes across BARTLEY'S feet and sprinkles the Holy Water over him*) It isn't that I haven't prayed for you Bartley to the Almighty God It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying but it's a great rest I'll have now and it's time surely It's a great rest I'll have now and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat and maybe a fish that would be stinking (*She kneels down again crossing herself and saying prayers under her breath*)

CATHLEEN (*to an old man*) Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises We have fine white boards herself bought God help her thinking Michael would be found and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working

THE OLD MAN (*looking at the boards*) Are there nails with them?

CATHLEEN There are not Colum we didn't think of the nails

ANOTHER MAN It's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails and

all the coffins she's seen made all ready

CATHLEEN It's getting old she is and broken

(MAURYA *stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of MICHAEL'S clothes beside the body sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water*)

NORA (*in a whisper to CATHLEEN*) She's quiet now and easy but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well It's fonder she was of Michael and would any one have thought that?

CATHLEEN (*slowly and clearly*) An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening and making great sorrow in the house?

MAURYA (*puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table and lays her hands together on BARTLEY'S feet*) They're all together this time and the end is come May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul and on Michael's soul and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch and Stephen and Shawn (*bending her head*) and may He have mercy on my soul Nora and on the soul of every one is left living in the world (*She pauses and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women then sinks away*)

MAURYA (*continuing*) Michael has a clean burial in the far north by the grace of the Almighty God Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards and a deep grave surely What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever and we must be satisfied (*She kneels down again and the curtain falls slowly*)

A Sunny Morning

A COMEDY OF MADRID IN ONE ACT

BY SERAFIN AND JOAQUIN
ALVAREZ QUINTERO

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY
LUCRETIA XAVIER FLOYD

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CHARACTERS

DOÑA LAURA

PETRA *her maid*

DON GONZALO

JUANITO *his servant*

SCENE A retired corner in a Park in Madrid

TIME The present

A SUNNY MORNING

SCENE—A sunny morning in a retired corner of a park in Madrid Autumn
A bench at Right

DOÑA LAURA *a handsome white haired old lady of about seventy refined in appearance her bright eyes and entire manner giving evidence that despite her age her mental faculties are unimpaired enters leaning upon the arm of her maid* PETRA *In her free hand she carries a parasol which serves also as a cane*

DOÑA LAURA I am so glad to be here I feared my seat would be occupied What a beautiful morning!

PETRA The sun is hot

DOÑA LAURA Yes you are only twenty (*She sits down on the bench*) Oh I feel more tired today than usual (*Noticing PETRA who seems impatient*) Go if you wish to chat with your guard

PETRA He is not mine señora he belongs to the park

DOÑA LAURA He belongs more to you than he does to the park Go find him but remain within calling distance

PETRA I see him over there waiting for me

DOÑA LAURA Do not remain more than ten minutes

PETRA Very well, señora (*Walks toward R*)

DOÑA LAURA Wait a moment

PETRA What does the señora wish?

DOÑA LAURA Give me the bread crumbs

PETRA I don't know what is the matter with me

DOÑA LAURA (*smiling*) I do Your head is where your heart is—with the guard

PETRA Here señora (*She hands DOÑA LAURA a small bag Exit PETRA by R*)

DOÑA LAURA Adiós (*Glances toward trees at R*) Here they come! They know just when to expect me (*She rises walks toward R and throws three handfuls of bread crumbs*) These are for the spryest these for the gluttons and these for the little ones which are the most persistent (*Laughs She returns to her seat and watches with a pleased expression the pigeons feeding*) There that big one is always first! I know him by his big head Now one now another now two now three— That little fellow is the least timid I believe he would eat from my hand That one takes his piece and flies up to that branch alone He is a philosopher But where do they all come from? It seems as if the news had spread Ha ha! Don't quarrel There is enough for all I'll bring more to-morrow

(Enter DON GONZALO and JUANITO from L C DON GONZALO is an old gentleman of seventy gouty and impatient He leans upon JUANITO'S arm and drags his feet somewhat as he walks)

DON GONZALO Idling their time away! They should be saying mass

JUANITO You can sit here señor There is only a lady (DOÑA LAURA turns her head and listens)

DON GONZALO I won't Juanito I want a bench to myself

JUANITO But there is none

DON GONZALO That one over there is mine

JUANITO There are three priests sitting there

DON GONZALO Rout them out Have they gone?

JUANITO No indeed They are talking

DON GONZALO Just as if they were glued to the seat No hope of their leaving Come this way Juanito (They walked toward the birds, Right)

DOÑA LAURA (indignantly) Look out!

DON GONZALO Are you speaking to me señora?

DOÑA LAURA Yes to you

DON GONZALO What do you wish?

DOÑA LAURA You have scared away the birds who were feeding on my crumbs

DON GONZALO What do I care about the birds?

DOÑA LAURA But I do

DON GONZALO This is a public park

DOÑA LAURA Then why do you complain that the priests have taken your bench?

DON GONZALO Señora we have not met I cannot imagine why you take the liberty of addressing me Come Juanito (Both go out R)

DOÑA LAURA What an ill-natured old man! Why must people get so fussy and cross when they reach a certain age? (Looking toward R) I am glad He lost that bench too Serves him right for scaring the birds He is furious Yes yes find a seat if you can Poor man! He is wiping the perspiration from his face Here he comes A carriage would not raise more dust than his feet

(Enter DON GONZALO and JUANITO by R and walk toward L)

DON GONZALO Have the priests gone yet Juanito?

JUANITO No indeed señor They are still there

DON GONZALO The authorities should place more benches here for these sunny mornings Well I suppose I must resign myself and sit on the bench with the old lady (Muttering to himself he sits at the extreme end of DOÑA LAURA'S bench and looks at her indignantly Touches his hat as he greets her) Good morning

DOÑA LAURA What, you here again?

DON GONZALO I repeat that we have not met

DON GONZALO Juanito, my book I do not care to listen to nonsense

DOÑA LAURA I was responding to your salute

DOÑA LAURA You are very polite

DON GONZALO Good morning' should be answered by good morning and that is all you should have said

DON GONZALO Pardon me señora but never interfere with what does not concern you

DOÑA LAURA I generally say what I think

DOÑA LAURA You should have asked permission to sit on this bench which is mine

DON GONZALO And more to the same effect Give me the book Juanito

DON GONZALO The benches here are public property

DOÑA LAURA Why you said the one the priests have was yours

JUANITO Here señor (JUANITO takes a book from his pocket hands it to DON GONZALO then exits by R DON GONZALO casting indignant glances at DOÑA LAURA puts on an enormous pair of glasses takes from his pocket a reading glass adjusts both to suit him and opens his book)

DON GONZALO Very well very well I have nothing more to say (*Between his teeth*) Senile old lady! She ought to be at home knitting and counting her beads

DOÑA LAURA I thought you were taking out a telescope

DOÑA LAURA Don't grumble any more I'm not going to leave just to please you

DON GONZALO Was that you?

DON GONZALO (*brushing the dust from his shoes with his handkerchief*) If the ground were sprinkled a little it would be an improvement

DOÑA LAURA Your sight must be keen

DON GONZALO Keener than yours is

DOÑA LAURA Do you use your handkerchief as a shoe brush?

DOÑA LAURA Yes evidently

DON GONZALO Why not?

DON GONZALO Ask the hares and partridges

DOÑA LAURA Do you use a shoe brush as a handkerchief?

DOÑA LAURA Ah! Do you hunt?

DON GONZALO What right have you to criticize my actions?

DON GONZALO I did and even now—

DOÑA LAURA A neighbor's right

DOÑA LAURA Oh yes of course!

DON GONZALO Yes señora. Every

Sunday I take my gun and dog you understand and go to one of my estates near Aravaca and kill time

DOÑA LAURA Yes kill time That is all you kill

DON GONZALO Do you think so? I could show you a wild boar's head in my study—

DOÑA LAURA Yes and I could show you a tiger's skin in my boudoir What does that prove?

DON GONZALO Very well señora please allow me to read Enough conversation

DOÑA LAURA Well you subside then

DON GONZALO But first I shall take a pinch of snuff (*Takes out snuff box*) Will you have some? (*Offers box to DOÑA LAURA*)

DOÑA LAURA If it is good

DON GONZALO It is of the finest You will like it

DOÑA LAURA (*taking pinch of snuff*) It clears my head

DON GONZALO And mine

DOÑA LAURA Do you sneeze?

DON GONZALO Yes señora three times

DOÑA LAURA And so do I What a coincidence! (*After taking the snuff they await the sneezes both anxiously and sneeze alternately three times each*)

DON GONZALO There I feel better

DOÑA LAURA So do I (*Aside*) The snuff has made peace between us

DON GONZALO You will excuse me if I read aloud?

DOÑA LAURA Read as loud as you please you will not disturb me

DON GONZALO (*reading*) All love is sad but sad as it is it is the best thing that we know That is from Campoamor

DOÑA LAURA Ah!

DON GONZALO (*reading*) The daughters of the mothers I once loved kiss me now as they would a graven image Those lines I take it are in a humorous vein

DOÑA LAURA (*laughing*) I take them so too

DON GONZALO There are some beautiful poems in this book Here Twenty years pass He returns

DOÑA LAURA You cannot imagine how it affects me to see you reading with all those glasses

DON GONZALO Can you read with out any?

DOÑA LAURA Certainly

DON GONZALO At your age? You're jesting

DOÑA LAURA Pass me the book, then (*Takes book reads aloud*)
Twenty years pass He returns
And each beholding the other
exclaims—

Can it be that this is he?
Heavens is it she?

(DOÑA LAURA returns the book to
DON GONZALO)

DON GONZALO Indeed I envy you your wonderful eyesight

DOÑA LAURA (*aside*) I know every word by heart

DON GONZALO I am very fond of good verses very fond I even composed some in my youth

DOÑA LAURA Good ones?

DON GONZALO Of all kinds I was a great friend of Espronceda Zorrilla Becquer and others I first met Zorrilla in America

DOÑA LAURA Why have you been in America?

DON GONZALO Several times The first time I went I was only six years old

DOÑA LAURA You must have gone with Columbus in one of his caravels!

DON GONZALO (*laughing*) Not quite as bad as that I am old I admit, but I did not know Ferdinand and Isabella (*They both laugh*) I was also a great friend of Campoamor I met him in Valencia I am a native of that city

DOÑA LAURA You are?

DON GONZALO I was brought up there and there I spent my early youth Have you ever visited that city?

DOÑA LAURA Yes señor Not far from Valencia there was a villa that, if still there should retain memories of me I spent several seasons there It was many many years ago It was near the sea hidden away among lemon and orange trees They called it—let me see what did they call it—Maricela

DON GONZALO (*startled*) Maricela?

DOÑA LAURA Maricela Is the name familiar to you?

DON GONZALO Yes very familiar If my memory serves me right for we forget as we grow old there lived in that villa the most beautiful woman I have ever seen and I am sure you I have seen many Let me see—what was her name? Laura—Laura—Laura Llorente

DOÑA LAURA (*startled*) Laura Llorente?

DON GONZALO Yes (*They look at each other intently*)

DOÑA LAURA (*recovering herself*) Nothing You reminded me of my best friend

DON GONZALO How strange!

DOÑA LAURA It is strange She was called The Silver Maiden

DON GONZALO Precisely The Silver Maiden By that name she was known in that locality I seem to see her as if she were before me now at that window with the red roses Do you remember that window?

DOÑA LAURA Yes I remember It was the window of her room

DON GONZALO She spent many hours there I mean in my day

DOÑA LAURA (*sighing*) And in mine too

DON GONZALO She was ideal Fair as a lily, jet black hair and black eyes with an uncommonly sweet expression She seemed to cast a radiance wherever she was Her figure was beautiful perfect What forms of sovereign beauty God models in human clay! She was a dream

DOÑA LAURA (*aside*) If you but knew that dream was now by your side you would realize what dreams come to (*Aloud*) She was very unfortunate and had a sad love affair

DON GONZALO Very sad (*They look at each other*)

DOÑA LAURA Did you hear of it?

DON GONZALO Yes

DOÑA LAURA The ways of Providence are strange (*Aside*) Gonzalo!

DON GONZALO The gallant lover in the same affair——

DOÑA LAURA Ah the duel?

DON GONZALO Precisely the duel The gallant lover was—my cousin of whom I was very fond

DOÑA LAURA Oh yes a cousin? My friend told me in one of her letters the story of that affair which was truly romantic He your cousin passed by on horseback every morning down the rose path under her window and tossed up to her balcony a bouquet of flowers which she caught

DON GONZALO And later in the afternoon the gallant horseman would return by the same path and catch the bouquet of flowers she would toss him Am I right?

DOÑA LAURA Yes They wanted to marry her to a merchant whom she would not have

DON GONZALO And one night when my cousin waited under her window to hear her sing this other person presented himself unexpectedly

DOÑA LAURA And insulted your cousin

DON GONZALO There was a quarrel

DOÑA LAURA And later a duel

DON GONZALO Yes at sunrise on the beach and the merchant was badly wounded My cousin had to conceal himself for a few days and later to fly

DOÑA LAURA You seem to know the story well

DON GONZALO And so do you

DOÑA LAURA I have explained that a friend repeated it to me

DON GONZALO As my cousin did to me (*Aside*) This is Laura!

DOÑA LAURA (*aside*) Why tell him? He does not suspect

DON GONZALO (*aside*) She is entirely innocent

DOÑA LAURA And was it you by any chance who advised your cousin to forget Laura?

DON GONZALO Why my cousin never forgot her!

DOÑA LAURA How do you account then for his conduct?

DON GONZALO I will tell you The young man took refuge in my house fearful of the consequences of a duel with a person highly regarded in that locality From my home he went to Seville then came to Madrid He wrote Laura many letters some of them in verse But undoubtedly they were intercepted by her parents for she never answered at all Gonzalo then in despair believing his love lost to him forever, joined the army went to Africa and there, in a trench met a glorious death, grasping the flag of Spain and whispering the name of his beloved Laura——

DOÑA LAURA (*aside*) What an atrocious lie!

DON GONZALO (*aside*) She lies worse than I do

DON GONZALO (*aside*) I could not have killed myself more gloriously

DOÑA LAURA Poor Laura!

DON GONZALO Poor Gonzalo!

DOÑA LAURA You must have been prostrated by the calamity

DOÑA LAURA (*aside*) I will not tell him that I married two years later

DON GONZALO Yes indeed señora As if he were my brother I presume though on the contrary that Laura in a short time was chasing butterflies in her garden indifferent to regret

DON GONZALO (*aside*) In three months I ran off to Paris with a ballet dancer

DOÑA LAURA No señor no!

DOÑA LAURA Fate is curious Here are you and I complete strangers met by chance discussing the romance of old friends of long ago! We have been conversing as if we were old friends

DON GONZALO It is woman's way

DON GONZALO Yes it is curious, considering the ill-natured prelude to our conversation

DOÑA LAURA Even if it were woman's way The Silver Maiden" was not of that disposition My friend awaited news for days months a year, and no letter came One afternoon just at sunset as the first stars were appearing she was seen to leave the house and with quickening steps wend her way toward the beach the beach where her beloved had risked his life She wrote his name on the sand then sat down upon a rock her gaze fixed upon the horizon The waves murmured their eternal threnody and slowly crept up to the rock where the maiden sat The tide rose with a boom and swept her out to sea

DOÑA LAURA You scared away the birds

DON GONZALO I was unreasonable perhaps

DOÑA LAURA Yes that was evident (*Sweetly*) Are you coming again to-morrow?

DON GONZALO Most certainly if it is a sunny morning And not only will I not scare away the birds but I will bring a few crumbs

DON GONZALO Good heavens!

DOÑA LAURA Thank you very much Birds are grateful and repay attention I wonder where my maid is? Petal! (*Signals for her maid*)

DOÑA LAURA The fishermen of that shore who often tell the story affirm that it was a long time before the waves washed away that name written on the sand (*Aside*) You will not get ahead of me in decorating my own funeral

DON GONZALO (*aside, looking at LAURA, whose back is turned*) No no I will not reveal myself I am grotesque now Better that she re-

call the gallant horseman who
passed daily beneath her window
tossing flowers

DOÑA LAURA Here she comes

DON GONZALO That Juanito! He
plays havoc with the nursemaids
(*Looks R and signals with his
hand*)

DOÑA LAURA (*aside looking at GON
ZALO whose back is turned*) No I
am too sadly changed It is better
he should remember me as the
black eyed girl tossing flowers as he
passed among the roses in the gar-
den (*JUANITO enters by R PETRA
by L She has a bunch of violets in
her hand*)

DOÑA LAURA Well Petra! At last!

DON GONZALO Juanito you are late

PETRA (*to DOÑA LAURA*) The guard
gave me these violets for you se-
ñora

DOÑA LAURA How very nice! Thank
him for me They are fragrant (*As
she takes the violets from her maid
a few loose ones fall to the ground*)

DON GONZALO My dear lady this
has been a great honor and a great
pleasure

DOÑA LAURA It has also been a
pleasure to me

DON GONZALO Good bye until to-
morrow

DOÑA LAURA Until tomorrow

DON GONZALO If it is sunny

DOÑA LAURA A sunny morning Will
you go to your bench?

DON GONZALO No I will come to
this—if you do not object?

DOÑA LAURA This bench is at your
disposal

DON GONZALO And I will surely
bring the crumbs

DOÑA LAURA Tomorrow then?

DON GONZALO Tomorrow!
(*LAURA walks away toward R sup-
ported by her MAID GONZALO be-
fore leaving with JUANITO trem-
bling and with a great effort stoops
to pick up the violets LAURA
dropped Just then LAURA turns her
head and surprises him picking up
the flowers*)

JUANITO What are you doing
señor?

DON GONZALO Juanito wait—

DOÑA LAURA (*aside*) Yes it is he!

DON GONZALO (*aside*) It is she and
no mistake
(*DOÑA LAURA and DON GONZALO
wave farewell*)

DOÑA LAURA Can it be that this is
he?

DON GONZALO 'Heavens is it she?
(*They smile once more as if she
were again at the window and he
below in the rose garden and then
disappear upon the arms of their
servants*)

CURTAIN

A Night at an Inn

BY LORD DUNSANY

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CHARACTERS

A E SCOTT FORTESCUE (THE TOFF) <i>a dilapidated gentleman</i>	}	<i>Merchant Sailors</i>
WILLIAM JONES (BILL)		
ALBERT THOMAS		
JACOB SMITH (SNIGGERS)		
1ST PRIEST OF KLESH		
2ND PRIEST OF KLESH		
3RD PRIEST OF KLESH		
KLESH		

The Curtain rises on a room in an inn

A NIGHT AT AN INN

SNIGGERS and BILL are talking THE TOFF is reading a paper ALBERT sits a little apart

SNIGGERS Whats the idea I wonder?

BILL I dont know

SNIGGERS And how much longer will he keep us here?

BILL We ve been here three days

SNIGGERS And avenge t seen a soul

BILL And a pretty penny it cost us when he rented the pub

SNIGGERS Ow long did e rent the pub for?

BILL You never know with him

SNIGGERS Its lonely enough

BILL Ow long did you rent the pub for Toffy?
(THE TOFF continues to read a sporting paper he takes no notice of what is said)

SNIGGERS Es such a toff

BILL Yet es clever no mistake

SNIGGERS Those clever ones are the beggars to make a muddle Their plans are clever enough but they dont work and then they make a mess of things much worse than you or me

BILL Ah

SNIGGERS I dont like this place

BILL Why not?

SNIGGERS I dont like the looks of it

BILL Hes keeping us here because here those niggers cant find us The three heathen priests what was looking for us so But we want to go and sell our ruby soon

ALBERT There s no sense in it

BILL Why not Albert?

ALBERT Because I gave those black devils the slip in Hull

BILL You give em the slip Albert?

ALBERT The slip all three of them The fellows with the gold spots on their foreheads I had the ruby then and I give them the slip in Hull

BILL How did you do it Albert?

ALBERT I had the ruby and they were following me

BILL Who told them you had the ruby? You didnt show it?

ALBERT No But they kind o. know

SNIGGERS They kind of know Albert?

ALBERT Yes they know if you ve

got it Well they sort of mouched after me and I tells a policeman and he says Oh they were only three poor niggers and they wouldn't hurt me Ugh! When I thought of what they did in Malta to poor old Jim

BILL Yes and to George in Bombay before we started

SNIGGERS Ugh!

BILL Why didn't you give em in charge?

ALBERT What about the ruby Bill?

BILL Ah!

ALBERT Well I did better than that I walks up and down through Hull I walks slow enough And then I turns a corner and I runs I never sees a corner but I turns it But sometimes I let a corner pass just to fool them I twists about like a hare Then I sits down and waits No priests

SNIGGERS What?

ALBERT No heathen black devils with gold spots on their face I give em the slp

BILL Well done Albert

SNIGGERS *(after a sigh of content)*
Why didn't you tell us?

ALBERT Cause e won't let you speak E's got is plans and e thinks were silly folk Things must be done is way And all the time I've give em the slp Might ave ad one o them crooked knives in him before now but for me who give em the slp in Hull

BILL Well done Albert

SNIGGERS Do you hear that Toffy? Albert has give em the slp

THE TOFF Yes I hear

SNIGGERS Well what do you say to that?

THE TOFF Oh Well done Albert

ALBERT And what a you going to do?

THE TOFF Going to wait

ALBERT Don't seem to know what e's waiting for

SNIGGERS It's a nasty place

ALBERT It's getting silly Bill Our money's gone and we want to sell the ruby Let's get on to a town

BILL But e won't come

ALBERT Then we'll leave him

SNIGGERS We'll be all right if we keep away from Hull

ALBERT We'll go to London

BILL But e must ave is share

SNIGGERS All right Only let's go
(To THE TOFF) Were going do you hear? Give us the ruby

THE TOFF Certainly *(He gives them a ruby from his waist coat pocket it is the size of a small hen's egg) (He goes on reading his paper)*

ALBERT Come on Sniggers
(Exeunt ALBERT and SNIGGERS)

BILL Good bye old man We'll give you your fair share but there's nothing to do here no girls no halls and we must sell the ruby

THE TOFF I'm not a fool Bill

BILL No no of course not Of course you ain't and you've helped us a lot Good bye You'll say good-bye

THE TOFF Oh yes Good bye (*Still reads paper Exit BILL*)
(*THE TOFF puts a revolver on the table beside him and goes on with his paper*)

SNIGGERS (*out of breath*) We've come back Toffy

THE TOFF So you have

ALBERT Toffy—How did they get here?

THE TOFF They walked of course

ALBERT But it's eighty miles

SNIGGERS Did you know they were here Toffy?

THE TOFF Expected them about now

ALBERT Eighty miles

BILL Toffy old man—what are we to do?

THE TOFF Ask Albert

BILL If they can do things like this there's no one can save us but you Toffy—I always knew you were a clever one We won't be fools any more We'll obey you Toffy

THE TOFF You're brave enough and strong enough There isn't many that would steal a ruby eye out of an idol's head and such an idol as that was to look at and on such a night You're brave enough Bill But you're all three of you fools Jim would have none of my plans and where's Jim? And George What did they do to him?

SNIGGERS Don't Toffy!

THE TOFF Well then your strength is no use to you You want cleverness or they'll have you the way that they had George and Jim

ALL Ugh!

THE TOFF These black priests would follow you round the world in circles Year after year till they got their idol's eye And if we died with it they'd follow our grand children That fool thinks he can escape men like that by running round three streets in the town of Hull

ALBERT God's truth *you* haven't escaped them because they're *ere*

THE TOFF So I supposed

ALBERT You *supposed*?

THE TOFF Yes I believe there's no announcement in the society papers But I took this country seat especially to receive them There's plenty of room if you dig it is pleasantly situated and what is most important it is in a very quiet neighborhood So I am at home to them this afternoon

BILL Well, you're a deep one

THE TOFF And remember you've only my wits between you and death and don't put your futile plans against those of an educated gentleman

ALBERT If you're a gentleman why don't you go about among gentlemen instead of the likes of us?

THE TOFF Because I was too clever for them as I am too clever for you

ALBERT Too clever for them?

THE TOFF I never lost a game of cards in my life

BILL You never lost a game!

THE TOFF Not when there was money on it

BILL Well well

THE TOFF Have a game of poker?

ALL No thanks

THE TOFF Then do as you're told

BILL All right Toffy

SNIGGERS I saw something just then Hadn't we better draw the curtains?

THE TOFF No

SNIGGERS What?

THE TOFF Don't draw the curtains

SNIGGERS Oh all right

BILL But Toffy they can see us One doesn't let the enemy do that I don't see why

THE TOFF No, of course you don't

BILL Oh all right Toffy
(*All begin to pull out revolvers*)

THE TOFF (*putting his own away*)
No revolvers please

ALBERT Why not?

THE TOFF Because I don't want any noise at my party We might get guests that hadn't been invited
Knives are a different matter
(*ALL draw knives THE TOFF signs to them not to draw them yet THE TOFF has already taken back his ruby*)

BILL I think they're coming Toffy

THE TOFF Not yet

ALBERT When will they come?

THE TOFF When I am quite ready to receive them Not before

SNIGGERS I should like to get this over

THE TOFF Should you? Then we'll have them now

SNIGGERS Now?

THE TOFF Yes Listen to me You shall do as you see me do You will all pretend to go out I'll show you how I've got the ruby When they see me alone they will come for their idol's eye

BILL How can they tell like this which of us has it?

THE TOFF I confess I don't know but they seem to

SNIGGERS What will you do when they come in?

THE TOFF I shall do nothing

SNIGGERS What?

THE TOFF They will creep up behind me Then my friends Sniggers and Bill and Albert who gave them the slip will do what they can

BILL All right Toffy Trust us

THE TOFF If you're a little slow you will see enacted the cheerful spectacle that accompanied the demise of Jim

SNIGGERS Don't Toffy We'll be there all right

THE TOFF Very well Now watch me *(He goes past the windows to the inner door Right he opens it inwards and then under cover of the open door he slips down on his knee and closes it remaining on the inside appearing to have gone out He signs to the others who understand Then he appears to re enter in the same manner)*

THE TOFF Now I shall sit with my back to the door You go out one by one so far as our friends can make out Crouch very low to be on the safe side They mustn't see you through the window
(BILL makes his sham exit)

THE TOFF Remember no revolvers The police are I believe proverbially inquisitive
(The other two follow BILL All three are now crouching inside the door Right THE TOFF puts the ruby beside him on the table He lights a cigarette)
(The door in back opens so slowly that you can hardly say at what moment it began THE TOFF picks up his paper)

(A NATIVE of India wriggles along the floor ever so slowly seeking cover from chairs He moves Left where THE TOFF is The three sailors are Right SNIGGERS and ALBERT lean forward BILL's arm keeps them back An arm chair had better conceal them from the Indian The black PRIEST nears THE TOFF)

(BILL watches to see if any more are coming Then he leaps forward alone (he has taken his boots off) and knifes the PRIEST)
(The PRIEST tries to shout but BILL's left hand is over his mouth)
(THE TOFF continues to read his sporting paper He never looks round)

BILL *(sotto voce)* There's only one Toffy What shall we do?

THE TOFF *(without turning his head)* Only one?

BILL Yes

THE TOFF Wait a moment Let me think *(Still apparently absorbed in his paper)* Ah yes You go back Bill We must attract another guest Now are you ready?

BILL Yes

THE TOFF All right You shall now see my demise at my Yorkshire residence You must receive guests for me *(He leaps up in full view of the window flings up both arms and falls on to the floor near the dead PRIEST)* Now be ready *(His eyes close)*
(There is a long pause Again the door opens very very slowly Another PRIEST creeps in He has three golden spots upon his forehead He looks round then he creeps up to his companion and turns him over

and looks inside each of his clenched hands Then he looks at the recumbent TOFF Then he creeps towards him BILL slips after him and knifes him like the other with his left hand over his mouth)

BILL (*sotto voce*) We've only got two Toffy

THE TOFF Still another

BILL What'll we do?

THE TOFF (*sitting up*) Hum

BILL This is the best way much

THE TOFF Out of the question
Never play the same game twice

BILL Why not Toffy?

THE TOFF Doesn't work if you do

BILL Well?

THE TOFF I have it Albert You will now walk into the room I showed you how to do it

ALBERT Yes

THE TOFF Just run over here and have a fight at this window with these two men

ALBERT But they're——

THE TOFF Yes they're dead my perspicuous Albert But Bill and I are going to resuscitate them——
Come on
(BILL *picks up a body under the arms*)

THE TOFF That's right, Bill (*Does the same*) Come and help us Sniggers—— (SNIGGERS *comes*) Keep

low keep low Wave their arms about Sniggers Don't show your self Now Albert over you go Our Albert is slain Back you get Bill Back Sniggers Still Albert Mustn't move when he comes Not a muscle (A FACE *appears at the window and stays for some time Then the door opens and looking craftily round the third PRIEST enters He looks at his companions bodies and turns round He suspects something He takes up one of the knives and with a knife in each hand he puts his back to the wall He looks to the left and right*)

THE TOFF Come on Bill
(The PRIEST *rushes to the door THE TOFF knifes the last PRIEST from behind*)

THE TOFF A good day's work my friends

BILL Well done Toffy Oh you are a deep one

ALBERT A deep one if ever there was one

SNIGGERS There ain't any more Bill are there?

THE TOFF No more in the world my friend

BILL Aye that's all there are There were only three in the temple Three priests and their beastly idol

ALBERT What is it worth, Toffy? Is it worth a thousand pounds?

THE TOFF It's worth all they've got in the shop Worth just whatever we like to ask for it

ALBERT Then we're millionaires now

THE TOFF Yes and what is more important we no longer have any heirs

BILL We'll have to sell it now

ALBERT That won't be easy It's a pity it isn't small and we had half a dozen Hadn't the idol any other on him?

BILL No he was green jade all over and only had this one eye He had it in the middle of his forehead, and was a long sight uglier than anything else in the world

SNIGGERS I'm sure we ought all to be very grateful to Toffy

BILL And indeed we ought

ALBERT If it hadn't have been for him——

BILL Yes if it hadn't have been for old Toffy

SNIGGERS He's a deep one

THE TOFF Well you see I just have a knack of foreseeing things

SNIGGERS I should think you did

BILL Why I don't suppose anything happens that our Toff doesn't foresee Does it, Toffy?

THE TOFF Well I don't think it does Bill I don't think it often does

BILL Life is no more than just a game of cards to our old Toff

THE TOFF Well we've taken these fellows' trick

SNIGGERS (*going to the window*)

It wouldn't do for anyone to see them

THE TOFF Oh nobody will come this way We're all alone on a moor

BILL Where will we put them?

THE TOFF Bury them in the cellar but there's no hurry

BILL And what then Toffy?

THE TOFF Why then we'll go to London and upset the ruby business We have really come through this job very nicely

BILL I think the first thing that we ought to do is to give a little supper to old Toffy We'll bury these fellows tonight

ALBERT Yes let's

SNIGGERS The very thing

BILL And we'll all drink his health

ALBERT Good old Toffy

SNIGGERS He ought to have been a general or a premier
(*They get bottles from cupboard etc*)

THE TOFF Well we've earned our bit of a supper
(*They sit down*)

BILL (*glass in hand*) Here's to old Toffy who guessed everything

ALBERT and SNIGGERS Good old Toffy

BILL Toffy who saved our lives and made our fortunes

ALBERT *and* SNIGGERS Hear Hear

THE TOFF And heres to Bill who saved me twice tonight

BILL Couldnt have done it but for your cleverness Toffy

SNIGGERS Hear hear Hear hear

ALBERT He foresees everything

BILL A speech Toffy A speech from our general

ALL Yes a speech

SNIGGERS A speech

THE TOFF Well get me some water This whiskey s too much for my head and I must keep it clear till our friends are safe in the cellar

BILL Water Yes of course Get him some water Sniggers

SNIGGERS We dont use water here Where shall I get it?

BILL Outside in the garden
(Exit SNIGGERS)

ALBERT Heres to fortune
(*They all drink*)

BILL Heres to Albert Thomas Esquire (*He drinks*)

THE TOFF Albert Thomas Esquire
(*He drinks*)

ALBERT And William Jones Esquire

THE TOFF Wilham Jones Esquire
(THE TOFF *and* ALBERT *drinks*)
(*Re enter SNIGGERS terrified*)

THE TOFF Hullo heres Jacob Smith Esquire J P alias Sniggers back again

SNIGGERS Toffy Ive been a thinking about my share in that ruby I dont want it Toffy I dont want it

THE TOFF Nonsense Sniggers nonsense

SNIGGERS You shall have it Toffy you shall have it yourself only say Sniggers has no share in this ere ruby Say it Toffy say it

BILL Want to turn informer Sniggers?

SNIGGERS No no Only I dont want the ruby Toffy

THE TOFF No more nonsense Sniggers were all in together in this if one hangs we all hang but they wont outwit me Besides its not a hanging affair they had their knives

SNIGGERS Toffy Toffy I always treated you fair, Toffy I was always one to say give Toffy a chance Take back my share Toffy

THE TOFF Whats the matter? What are you driving at?

SNIGGERS Take it back Toffy

THE TOFF Answer me what are you up to?

SNIGGERS I dont want my share any more

BILL Have you seen the police?
(ALBERT *pulls out his knife*)

THE TOFF No no knives Albert

ALBERT What then?

THE TOFF The honest truth in open court barring the ruby We were at tacked

SNIGGERS Theres no police

THE TOFF Well then whats the matter?

BILL Out with it

SNIGGERS I swear to God

ALBERT Well?

THE TOFF Don't interrupt

SNIGGERS I swear I saw something
what I didn't like

THE TOFF What you didn't like?

SNIGGERS (*in tears*) O Toffy Toffy
take it back Take my share Say
you take it

THE TOFF What has he seen?
(*Dead silence only broken by SNIG-
GERS sobs Then stony steps are
heard*)

(*Enter a hideous IDOL. It is blind
and gropes its way. It gropes its way
to the ruby and picks it up and
screws it into a socket in the fore
head*)

(*SNIGGERS still weeps softly the rest
stare in horror The IDOL steps out
not groping Its steps move off then
stop*)

THE TOFF Oh, great heavens!

ALBERT (*in a childish plaintive
voice*) What is it Toffy?

BILL Albert it is that obscene idol
(*in a whisper*) come from India

ALBERT It is gone

BILL It has taken its eye

SNIGGERS We are saved

OFF A VOICE (*with outlandish ac-
cent*) Meestaire William Jones
Able Seaman

(*THE TOFF has never spoken never
moved He only gazes stupidly in
horror*)

BILL Albert Albert what is this?
(*He rises and walks out One moan
is heard SNIGGERS goes to window
He falls back sickly*)

ALBERT (*in a whisper*) What has
happened?

SNIGGERS I have seen it I have seen
it Oh I have seen it (*He returns to
table*)

THE TOFF (*laying his hand very
gently on SNIGGERS arm speaking
softly and winningly*) What was it
Sniggers?

SNIGGERS I have seen it

ALBERT What?

SNIGGERS Oh

VOICE Meestaire Albert Thomas
Able Seaman

ALBERT Must I go Toffy? Toffy
must I go?

SNIGGERS (*clutching him*) Don't
move

ALBERT (*going*) Toffy Toffy
(*Exit*)

VOICE Meestaire Jacob Smith Able
Seaman

SNIGGERS I can't go Toffy I can't
go I can't do it (*He goes*)

VOICE Meestaire Arnold Everett
Scott Fortescue late Esquire Able
Seaman

THE TOFF I did not foresee it.
(*Exit*)

CURTAIN

The Dear Departed

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY STANLEY HOUGHTON

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CHARACTERS

MRS SLATER }
MRS JORDAN } *sisters*
HENRY SLATER }
BEN JORDAN } *their husbands*
VICTORIA SLATER *a girl of ten*
ABEL MERRYWEATHER

The action takes place in a provincial town on a Saturday afternoon

THE DEAR DEPARTED

The scene is the sitting-room of a small house in a lower middle class district of a provincial town. On the spectator's left is the window with the blinds down. A sofa is in front of it. On his right is a fireplace with an arm chair by it. In the middle of the wall facing the spectator is the door into the passage. To the left of the door a cheap shabby chest of drawers to the right a sideboard. In the middle of the room is the table with chairs round it. Ornaments and a cheap American clock are on the mantelpiece in the hearth a kettle. By the sideboard a pair of gaudy new carpet slippers. The table is partly laid for tea and the necessaries for the meal are on the sideboard as also are copies of an evening paper and of Tit Bits and Pearson's Weekly. Turning to the left through the door takes you to the front door, to the right upstairs. In the passage a hat stand is visible.

When the curtain rises MRS SLATER is seen laying the table. She is a vigorous plump red faced vulgar woman prepared to do any amount of straight talking to get her own way. She is in black but not in complete mourning. She listens a moment and then goes to the window opens it and calls into the street.

MRS SLATER (*sharply*) Victoria! Victoria! D'ye hear? Come in will you?

(*MRS SLATER closes window and puts the blind straight and then returns to her work at the table. VICTORIA, a precocious girl of ten dressed in colors enters.*)

MRS S I'm amazed at you Victoria. I really am. How you can be gallivanting about in the street with your grandfather lying dead and cold upstairs. I don't know. Be off now and change your dress before your Aunt Elizabeth and your Uncle Ben come. It would never do for them to find you in colors.

VICTORIA What are they coming for? They haven't been here for ages.

MRS S They're coming to talk over poor grandpa's affairs. Your

father sent them a telegram as soon as we found he was dead. (*A noise is heard*) Good gracious that's never them. (*MRS SLATER hurries to the door and opens it*) No thank goodness it's only your father. (*HENRY SLATER, a stooping heavy man with a drooping moustache enters. He is wearing a black tail coat, gray trousers, a black tie and a bowler hat. He carries a little paper parcel.*)

HENRY Not come yet eh?

MRS S You can see they haven't, can't you? Now Victoria be off upstairs and that quick. Put your white frock on with a black sash. (*VICTORIA goes out.*)

MRS S (*to HENRY*) I'm not satisfied but it's the best we can do till our new blacks ready and Ben and Elizabeth will never have

thought about mourning yet so well outshone them there (HENRY sits in the armchair by the fire) Get your boots off Henry Elizabeths that prying she notices the least speck of dirt

HENRY I'm wondering if they'll come at all When you and Elizabeth quarrelled she said she'd never set foot in your house again

MRS S She'll come fast enough after her share of what grandfather's left You know how hard she can be when she likes Where she gets it from I can't tell

(MRS SLATER unwraps the parcel HENRY has brought It contains sliced tongue which she puts on a dish on the table)

HENRY I suppose it's in the family

MRS S What do you mean by that, Henry Slater?

HENRY I was referring to your father not to you Where are my slippers?

MRS S In the kitchen but you want a new pair those old ones are nearly worn out (Nearly breaking down) You don't seem to realize what it's costing me to bear up like I am doing My heart's fit to break when I see the little trifles that belonged to grandfather lying around and think he'll never use them again (Briskly) Here! you'd better wear these slippers of grandfather's now It's lucky he'd just got a new pair

HENRY They'll be very small for me my dear

MRS S They'll stretch won't they? I'm not going to have them wasted

(She has finished laying the table) Henry I've been thinking about that bureau of grandfather's that's in his bedroom You know I always wanted to have it after he died

HENRY You must arrange with Elizabeth when you're dividing things up

MRS S Elizabeths that sharp she'll see I'm after it and she'll drive a hard bargain over it Eh what it is to have a low money grubbing spirit!

HENRY Perhaps she's got her eye on the bureau as well

MRS S She's never been here since grandfather bought it If it was only down here instead of in his room she'd never guess it wasn't our own

HENRY (startled) Amelia! (He rises)

MRS S Henry why shouldn't we bring that bureau down here now? We could do it before they come

HENRY (stupefied) I wouldn't care to

MRS S Don't look so daft Why not?

HENRY It doesn't seem delicate, somehow

MRS S We could put that shabby old chest of drawers upstairs where the bureau is now Elizabeth could have that and welcome I've always wanted to get rid of it (She points to the drawers)

HENRY Suppose they come when we're doing it

MRS s I'll fasten the front door
Get your coat off Henry we'll
change it

(MRS SLATER goes out to fasten the
front door HENRY takes his coat off
MRS SLATER reappears)

MRS s I'll run up and move the
chairs out of the way

(VICTORIA appears dressed accord-
ing to her mother's instructions)

VIC Will you fasten my frock up
the back Mother?

MRS s I'm busy get your father to
do it

(MRS SLATER hurries upstairs, and
HENRY fastens the frock)

VIC What have you got your coat
off for Father?

HENRY Mother and me is going to
bring grandfather's bureau down
here

VIC (after a moment's thought)
Are we pinching it before Aunt
Elizabeth comes?

HENRY (shocked) No my child
Grandpa gave it your mother before
he died

VIC This morning?

HENRY Yes

VIC Ah! He was drunk this morning

HENRY Hush you mustn't ever say
he was drunk now

(HENRY has fastened the frock and
MRS SLATER appears carrying a
handsome clock under her arm)

MRS s I thought I'd fetch this
down as well (She puts it on the

mantelpiece) Our clock's worth
nothing and this always appealed to
me

VIC That's grandpa's clock

MRS s Chut! Be quiet! It's ours
now Come Henry lift your end
Victoria, don't breathe a word to
your aunt about the clock and the
bureau (They carry the chest of
drawers through the doorway)

VIC (to herself) I thought we'd
pinched them

(After a short pause there is a sharp
knock at the front door)

MRS s (from upstairs) Victoria, if
that's your aunt and uncle you're
not to open the door

(VICTORIA peeps through the win-
dow)

VIC Mother it's them!

MRS s You're not to open the
door till I come down (Knocking
repeated) Let them knock away
(There is a heavy bumping noise)
Mind the wall Henry

(HENRY and MRS SLATER very hot
and flushed stagger in with a pretty
old fashioned bureau containing a
locked desk They put it where the
chest of drawers was and straighten
the ornaments etc The knocking is
repeated)

MRS s That was a near thing Open
the door Victoria Now Henry get
your coat on (She helps him)

HENRY Did we knock much plaster
off the wall?

MRS s Never mind the plaster
Do I look all right? (Straightening
her hair at the glass) Just watch

Elizabeth's face when she sees we're all in half mourning (*Throwing him Tit Bits*) Take this and sit down Try and look as if we'd been waiting for them

(HENRY sits in the armchair and MRS SLATER left of table They read ostentatiously VICTORIA ushers in BEN and MRS JORDAN The latter is a stout complacent woman with an impassive face and an irritating air of being always right She is wearing a complete and deadly outfit of new mourning crowned by a great black hat with plumes BEN is also in complete new mourning with black gloves and a band round his hat He is rather a jolly little man accustomed to be humorous but at present trying to adapt himself to the regrettable occasion He has a bright chirpy little voice MRS JORDAN sails into the room and solemnly goes straight to MRS SLATER and kisses her The men shake hands MRS JORDAN kisses HENRY BEN kisses MRS SLATER Not a word is spoken MRS SLATER furtively inspects the new mourning)

MRS JORDAN Well Amelia and so he's gone at last

MRS S Yes he's gone He was seventy-two a fortnight last Sunday (*She sniffs back a tear* MRS JORDAN sits on the left of the table MRS SLATER on the right HENRY in the armchair BEN on the sofa with VICTORIA near him)

BEN (*chirpily*) Now Amelia you mustn't give way We've all got to die some time or other It might have been worse

MRS S I don't see how

BEN It might have been one of us

HENRY It's taken you a long time to get here Elizabeth

MRS J Oh I couldn't do it I really couldn't do it

MRS S (*suspiciously*) Couldn't do what?

MRS J I couldn't start without getting the mourning (*Glancing at her sister*)

MRS S We've ordered ours you may be sure (*Acidly*) I never could fancy buying ready-made things

MRS J No? For myself it's such a relief to get into the black And now perhaps you'll tell us all about it What did the doctor say?

MRS S Oh he's not been near yet

MRS J Not been near?

BEN (*in the same breath*) Didn't you send for him at once?

MRS S Of course I did Do you take me for a fool? I sent Henry at once for Dr Pringle but he was out

BEN You should have gone for an other Eh Eliza?

MRS J Oh yes It's a fatal mistake

MRS S Pringle attended him when he was alive and Pringle shall attend him when he's dead That's professional etiquette

BEN Well you know your own business best but——

MRS J Yes—it's a fatal mistake

MRS S Don't talk so silly Eliza beth What good could a doctor have done?

MRS J Look at the many cases of persons being restored to life hours after they were thought to be gone

HENRY That's when they've been drowned Your father wasn't drowned Elizabeth

BEN (*humorously*) There wasn't much fear of that If there was one thing he couldn't bear it was water (*He laughs but no one else does*)

MRS J (*pained*) Ben!
(*BEN is crushed at once*)

MRS S (*piqued*) I'm sure he washed regular enough

MRS J If he did take a drop too much at times we'll not dwell on that now

MRS S Father had been merry this morning He went out soon after breakfast to pay his insurance

BEN My word it's a good thing he did

MRS J He always was thoughtful in that way He was too honorable to have gone without paying his premium

MRS S Well he must have gone round to the *Ring o Bells* afterwards for he came in as merry as a sandboy I says Were only waiting Henry to start dinner
Dinner he says I don't want no dinner I'm going to bed!

BEN (*shaking his head*) Ah! Dear dear

HENRY And when I came in I found him undressed sure enough and snug in bed (*He rises and stands on the hearthrug*)

MRS J (*definitely*) Yes he'd had a warning I'm sure of that Did he know you?

HENRY Yes He spoke to me

MRS J Did he say he'd had a warning?

HENRY No He said Henry would you mind taking my boots off I for got before I got into bed

MRS J He must have been wandering

HENRY No he'd got 'em on all right

MRS S And when we'd finished dinner I thought I'd take up a bit of something on a tray He was lying there for all the world as if he was asleep so I put the tray down on the bureau—(*correcting her self*) on the chest of drawers—and went to waken him (*A pause*) He was quite cold

HENRY Then I heard Amelia calling for me and I ran upstairs

MRS S Of course we could do nothing

MRS J He was gone?

HENRY There wasn't any doubt.

MRS J I always knew he'd go sudden in the end
(*A pause they wipe their eyes and sniff back tears*)

MRS S (*rising briskly at length, in a*

businesslike tone) Well will you go up and look at him now or shall we have tea?

MRS J What do you say Ben?

BEN I'm not particular

MRS J (*surveying the table*) Well then if the kettle's nearly ready we may as well have tea first
(MRS SLATER *puts the kettle on the fire and gets tea ready*)

HENRY One thing we may as well decide now the announcement in the papers

MRS J I was thinking of that What would you put?

MRS S At the residence of his daughter 235 Upper Cornbank Street etc

HENRY You wouldn't care for a bit of poetry?

MRS J I like 'Never Forgotten' It's refined

HENRY Yes but it's rather soon for that

BEN You couldn't very well have forgot him the day after

MRS S I always fancy A loving husband a kind father and a faithful friend

BEN (*doubtfully*) Do you think that's right?

HENRY I don't think it matters whether it's right or not

MRS J No it's more for the look of the thing

HENRY I saw a verse in *The Evening News* yesterday Proper poetry it was It rhymed (*He gets the paper and reads*)

*Despised and forgotten by some
you may be
But the spot that contains you is
sacred to me*

MRS J That'll never do You don't say Sacred to me

HENRY It's in the paper

MRS S You wouldn't say it if you were speaking properly but it's different in poetry

HENRY Poetic license you know

MRS J No that'll never do We want a verse that says how much we loved him and refers to all his good qualities and says what a heavy loss we've had

MRS S You want a whole poem That'll cost a good lot

MRS J Well we'll think about it after tea and then we'll look through his bits of things and make a list of them There's all the furniture in his room

HENRY There's no jewellery or valuables of that sort

MRS J Except his gold watch He promised that to our Jimmy

MRS S Promised your Jimmy! I never heard of that

MRS J Oh but he did Amelia when he was living with us He was very fond of Jimmy

MRS S Well (*Amazed*) I don't know!

BEN Anyhow there's his insurance money Have you got the receipt for the premium he paid this morning?

MRS S I've not seen it
(VICTORIA jumps up from the sofa and comes behind the table)

VIC Mother I don't think grandpa went to pay his insurance this morning

MRS S He went out

VIC Yes but he didn't go into the town He met old Mr Tattersall down the street and they went off past St Philips's Church

MRS S To the *Ring o Bells* I'll be bound

BEN The *Ring o Bells*?

MRS S That public house that John Shorrock's widow keeps He is always hanging about there Oh if he hasn't paid it—

BEN Do you think he hasn't paid it? Was it overdue?

MRS S I should think it was overdue

MRS J Something tells me he's not paid it I've a warning I know it he's not paid it

BEN The drunken old beggar

MRS J He's done it on purpose just to annoy us

MRS S After all I've done for him having to put up with him in the house these three years It's nothing short of swindling

MRS J I had to put up with him for five years

MRS S And you were trying to turn him over to us all the time

HENRY But we don't know for certain that he's not paid the premium

MRS J I do It's come over me all at once that he hasn't

MRS S Victoria run upstairs and fetch that bunch of keys that's on your grandpa's dressing table

VIC (*timidly*) In grandpa's room?

MRS S Yes

VIC I—I don't like to

MRS S Don't talk so silly There's no one can hurt you (VICTORIA goes out reluctantly) We'll see if he's locked the receipt up in the bureau

BEN In where? In this thing? (*He rises and examines it*)

MRS J (*also rising*) Where did you pick that up Amelia? It's new since last I was here
(*They examine it closely*)

MRS S Oh—Henry picked it up one day

MRS J I like it It's artistic Did you buy it at an auction?

HENRY Eh? Where did I buy it, Amelia?

MRS J Yes, at an auction.

BEN (*disparagingly*) Oh, second hand

MRS J Don't show your ignorance
Ben All artistic things are second
hand Look at those old masters
(VICTORIA returns very scared She
closes the door after her)

VIC Mother! Mother!

MRS s What is it child?

VIC Grandpa's getting up

BEN What?

MRS s What do you say?

VIC Grandpa's getting up

MRS J The child's crazy

MRS s Don't talk so silly Don't you
know your grandpa's dead?

VIC No no he's getting up I saw
him
(They are transfixed with amazement BEN and MRS JORDAN left of
table VICTORIA clings to MRS
SLATER right of table HENRY near
fireplace)

MRS J You'd better go up and see
for yourself Amelia

MRS s Here—come with me
Henry
(HENRY draws back terrified)

BEN (suddenly) Hist! Listen
(They look at the door A slight
chuckling is heard outside The door
opens revealing an old man clad in
a faded but gay dressing gown He
is in his stocking feet Although
over seventy he is vigorous and well
colored his bright malicious eyes
twinkle under his heavy reddish
gray eyebrows He is obviously
either grandfather ABEL MERRY
WEATHER or else his ghost)

ABEL What's the matter with little
Vicky? (He sees BEN and MRS JOR
DAN) Hello! What brings you here?
How's yourself Ben?
(ABEL thrusts his hand at BEN who
skips back smartly and retreats with
MRS JORDAN to a safe distance be
low the sofa)

MRS s (approaching ABEL gin-
gerly) Grandfather is that you?
(She pokes him with her hand to
see if he is solid)

ABEL Of course it's me Don't do
that Meha What the devil do you
mean by this tomfoolery?

MRS s (to the others) He's not
dead

BEN Doesn't seem like it

ABEL (irritated by the whispering)
You've kept away long enough Liz
zie and now you've come you don't
seem over pleased to see me

MRS J You took us by surprise
Father Are you keeping quite well?

ABEL (trying to catch the words)
Eh? What?

MRS J Are you quite well?

ABEL Ay I'm right enough but for
a bit of a headache I wouldn't mind
betting that I'm not the first in this
house to be carried to the cemetery
I always think Henry there looks
none too healthy

MRS J Well I never!
(ABEL crosses to the armchair and
HENRY gets out of his way to the
front of the table)

ABEL Meha what the dickens did I
do with my new slippers?

MRS s (*confused*) Arent they by the hearth Grandfather?

MRS j (*disconcerted*) I couldnt just now I dont feel equal to it

ABEL I dont see them (*Observing HENRY trying to remove the slippers*) Why youve got em on Henry

ABEL Why Ben youie in mourning! And Lizzie too And Melia and Henry and little Vicky! Whos gone dead? Its some one in the family (*He chuckles*)

MRS s (*promptly*) I told him to put them on to stretch them they were that new and hard Now Henry (*MRS SLATER snatches the slippers from HENRY and gives them to ABEL who puts them on and sits in armchair*)

MRS s No one you know Father A relation of Bens

ABEL And what relation of Bens?

MRS s His brother

MRS j (*to BEN*) Well I dont call that delicate stepping into a dead mans shoes in such haste

BEN (*to MRS s*) Dang it I never had one

(*HENRY goes up to the window and pulls up the blind VICTORIA runs across to ABEL and sits on the floor at his feet*)

ABEL Dear dear And what was his name Ben?

VIC Oh Grandpa Im so glad youre not dead

BEN (*at a loss*) Er—er (*He crosses to front of table*)

MRS s (*in a vindictive whisper*) Hold your tongue Victoria

MRS s (*prompting*) Frederick

ABEL Eh? Whats that? Whos gone dead?

MRS j (*prompting*) Albert

MRS s (*loudly*) Victoria says shes sorry about your head

BEN Er—Fred—Alb—Isaac

ABEL Ah thank you Vicky but Im feeling better

ABEL Isaac? And where did your brother Isaac die?

MRS s (*to MRS j*) Hes so fond of Victoria

BEN In—er—in Australia

MRS j (*to MRS s*) Yes hes fond of our Jimmy too

ABEL Dear dear Hed be older than you eh?

MRS s Youd better ask him if he promised your Jimmy his gold watch

BEN Yes five year

ABEL Ay ay Are you going to the funeral?

BEN Oh yes

MRS s and MRS j No no

BEN No of course not (*He retires to the left*)

BEN And could you see and hear Mr Merryweather?

ABEL (*rising*) Well I suppose you've only been waiting for me to begin tea I'm feeling hungry

ABEL Yes but I don't remember seeing anything particular Mustard Ben
(*BEN passes the mustard*)

MRS S (*taking up the kettle*) I'll make tea

MRS S Of course not Grandfather It was all your fancy You must have been asleep

ABEL Come along now sit you down and let's be jolly
(*ABEL sits at the head of the table facing spectator BEN and MRS JORDAN on the left VICTORIA brings a chair and sits by ABEL MRS SLATER and HENRY sit on the right Both the women are next to ABEL*)

ABEL (*snappishly*) I tell you I wasn't asleep Melia Damn it I ought to know

MRS J Didn't you see Henry or Amelia come into the room?

MRS S Henry give Grandpa some tongue

ABEL (*scratching his head*) Now let me think——

ABEL Thank you I'll make a start
(*He helps himself to bread and butter*)

MRS S I wouldn't press him Eliza beth Don't press him

(*HENRY serves the tongue and MRS SLATER pours out tea Only ABEL eats with any heartiness*)

HENRY No I wouldn't worry him

BEN Glad to see you've got an appetite Mr Merryweather although you've not been so well

ABEL (*suddenly recollecting*) Ay begad! Melia and Henry what the devil did you mean by shifting my bureau out of my bedroom? (*HENRY and MRS SLATER are speechless*)
D you hear me? Henry! Melia!

ABEL Nothing serious I've been lying down for a bit

MRS J What bureau was that Father?

MRS S Been to sleep Grandfather?

ABEL No I've not been to sleep

ABEL Why my bureau the one I bought——

MRS S and HENRY Oh!

MRS J (*pointing to the bureau*) Was it that one Father?

ABEL (*eating and drinking*) I can't exactly call everything to mind but I remember I was a bit dazed, like I couldn't move an inch hand or foot

ABEL Ah that's it What's it doing here? Eh? (*A pause The clock on the mantelpiece strikes six Every one looks at it*) Drat me if that isn't

my clock too What the devil's been going on in this house?
(*A slight pause*)

BEN Well I'll be hanged

MRS J (*rising*) I'll tell you what's been going on in this house Father Nothing short of robbery

MRS S Be quiet Elizabeth

MRS J I'll not be quiet Oh I call it double faced

HENRY Now now Elizabeth

MRS J And you too Are you such a poor creature that you must do every dirty thing she tells you?

MRS S (*rising*) Remember where you are Elizabeth

HENRY (*rising*) Come come No quarrelling

BEN (*rising*) My wife's every right to speak her own mind

MRS S Then she can speak it out side not here

ABEL (*thumping the table*) Damn it all will some one tell me what's been going on?

MRS J Yes I will I'll not see you robbed

ABEL Who's been robbing me?

MRS J Amelia and Henry They've stolen your clock and bureau (*Working herself up*) They sneaked into your room like a thief in the night and stole them after you were dead

HENRY and MRS S Hush! Quiet Elizabeth!

MRS J I'll not be stopped After you were dead I say

ABEL After who was dead?

MRS J You

ABEL But I'm not dead

MRS J No but they thought you were
(*A pause ABEL gazes round at them*)

ABEL Oho! So that's why you're all in black today You thought I was dead (*He chuckles*) That was a big mistake (*He sits and resumes his tea*)

MRS S (*sobbing*) Grandfather

ABEL It didn't take you long to start dividing my things between you

MRS J No Father you mustn't think that Amelia was simply getting hold of them on her own account

ABEL You always were a keen one, Amelia I suppose you thought the will wasn't fair

HENRY Did you make a will?

ABEL Yes it was locked up in the bureau

MRS J And what was in it, Father?

ABEL That doesn't matter now I'm thinking of destroying it and making another

MRS S (*sobbing*) Grandfather
you'll not be hard on me

ABEL I'll trouble you for another
cup of tea Melia two lumps and
plenty of milk

MRS S With pleasure Grandfather
(*She pours out the tea*)

ABEL I don't want to be hard on
any one I'll tell you what I'm going
to do Since your mother died I've
lived part of the time with you
Melia and part with you Lizzie
Well I shall make a new will leav-
ing all my bits of things to whoever
I'm living with when I die How
does that strike you?

HENRY It's a bit of a lottery like

MRS J And who do you intend to
live with from now?

ABEL (*drinking his tea*) I'm just
coming to that

MRS J You know Father it's quite
time you came to live with us again
We'd make you very comfortable

MRS S No he's not been with us as
long as he was with you

MRS J I may be wrong but I don't
think Father will fancy living on
with you after what's happened to-
day

ABEL So you'd like to have me
again Lizzie?

MRS J You know we're ready for
you to make your home with us for
as long as you please

ABEL What do you say to that
Melia?

MRS S All I can say is that Eliza-
beth's changed her mind in the last
two years (*Rising*) Grandfather
do you know what the quarrel be-
tween us was about?

MRS J Amelia don't be a fool sit
down

MRS S No if I'm not to have him
you shan't either We quarrelled be-
cause Elizabeth said she wouldn't
take you off our hands at any price
She said she'd had enough of you to
last a life time and we'd got to keep
you

ABEL It seems to me that neither of
you has any cause to feel proud
about the way you've treated me

MRS S If I've done anything wrong
I'm sure I'm sorry for it

MRS J And I can't say more than
that, too

ABEL It's a bit late to say it now
You neither of you cared to put up
with me

MRS S *and* MRS J No no Grand-
father

ABEL Ay you both say that because
of what I've told you about leaving
my money Well since you don't
want me I'll go to some one that
does

BEN Come Mr Merryweather
you've got to live with one of your
daughters

ABEL I'll tell you what I've got to
do On Monday next I've got to do
three things I've got to go to the
lawyers and alter my will and I've

got to go to the insurance office and pay my premium and I've got to go to St Philips's Church and get married

BEN and HENRY What!

MRS J Get married!

MRS S He's out of his senses
(General consternation)

ABEL I say I'm going to get married

MRS S Who to?

ABEL To Mrs John Shorrocks who keeps the *Ring o Bells* We've had it fixed up a good while now but I was keeping it for a pleasant surprise (*He rises*) I felt I was a bit of a burden to you so I found some one who'd think it a pleasure to look after me We shall be very glad to see you at the ceremony (*He gets to the door*) Till Monday then Twelve o'clock at St Philips's Church (*Opening the door*) It's a good thing you brought that bureau downstairs Melia It'll be handier to carry across to the *Ring o Bells* on Monday (*He goes out*)

CURTAIN

The Drums of Oude

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT

BY AUSTIN STRONG

Dedicated to my wife—Mary Strong
A S

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CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN HECTOR MCGREGOR

LIEUTENANT ALAN HARTLEY

SERGEANT MCDUGAL

STEWART *the sentry*

TWO HINDUSTANI SERVANTS

MRS JACK CLAYTON *Hartley's sister*

A PRIVATE

SCENE *An interior of a palace in Northern India occupied by British troops*

TIME *Spring of 1857*

THE DRUMS OF OUDE

Music before curtain rises to be of that mysterious nervous Indian quality in a minor key with the barbaric drum beat measure throughout

All lights out Theater in total darkness Drumming is heard from beyond the stage mingled with faint cries This drumming must be great in volume yet low in key It stops short

Repeats itself and again stops short The curtain has gone up in the darkness The audience first becomes aware of the moonlit Indian City in the distance over the top of an intervening forest

Then they see the outline of the archway and the stage itself which is a store room in an old Indian Palace now occupied by the British There is no furniture in the room except a piano R and a business desk R rear A large Indian carpet is upon the floor The only decorations are two crossed swords on either side of the arch

Sentry STEWART in Highland uniform passes beyond the arch in the moonlight from R to L Pause He returns Pause Then again from R to L The drumming swells in the distance and seems to come from the Indian City As the SENTRY appears on his return beat the drumming ceases He halts center of archway and turns a puzzled face toward the audience and listens intently Dead silence

He is seen to breathe a sigh of relief straighten himself and continue his stolid march Silence

Then with a crash door L bursts open and MCGREGOR slides in He shuts the door softly and swiftly and listens intently with his ear to the panels He gives a glance at the open arch then takes three steps center stoops takes hold of the corner of carpet and flings it back Rises goes back to door L and listens at panels again Then returns center and opens a trap door which was beneath the carpet The trap-door is three feet square and eight inches thick

He looks carefully in and then closing it returns the carpet to its place stands on it and listens intently his eyes to the audience He then draws from his left hand coat pocket a large leather cigar case Chooses a cigar and returns case He then slowly backs to wall R When he reaches it he strikes a match upon it with a downward sweep of his hand He lights cigar and carefully putting out the match he assumes a graceful easy position his back against the wall, his hands rammed deep in his coat pockets and his right foot crossed over his left his eyes always on the corner of the carpet

STEWART the sentry is seen to pass at rear He halts again and listens as if he heard something He turns his face toward the audience to listen better and with a start becomes aware of MCGREGOR's presence He brings his musket sharply to the shoulder comes down the stage and halts three paces from MCGREGOR his face toward the audience He makes the stiff soldier's salute, right hand across the body

MCGREGOR continues smoking and regarding the carpet (Pause)

MCGREGOR (*cigar between his teeth*) Well Stewart?

STEWART Please sir! Beg pardon sir but did you ear anything sir?

MCGREGOR Eh?

STEWART Listen sir!
(MCGREGOR *removes the cigar from his mouth and listens* *Dead silence*)

MCGREGOR What do you mean?

STEWART (*intensely*) Listen sir!
(*The drumming heard It stops abruptly*) There sir!

MCGREGOR Well?

STEWART Beg pardon sir—but me and the men don't fancy it, sir

MCGREGOR That will do Stewart

STEWART Yes sir! (*Salutes stiffly—faces about—marches out and resumes sentry duty and is seen at stated intervals passing and repassing beyond the arch*)

Door L softly opens and two HINDU STANI SERVANTS enter one bearing a standard lamp with a red shade The lamp is lighted The other bears a small table which he places at L center The standard lamp is placed near the business desk SERGEANT MCDUGAL enters L with PRIVATE both in Highland uniform and carrying telegraphic apparatus They cross the stage and exeunt door R After a moment ticking is heard from that room The two SERVANTS have by this time returned with the two wicker chairs which they place R and L and then exeunt SERGEANT MCDUGAL and PRI

VATE return through door R The PRIVATE crosses stage and exits door L SERGEANT MCDUGAL comes down center Enter FIRST and SECOND HINDUSTANI SERVANTS through door L They go over to MCGREGOR and salaam deeply before him)

MCGREGOR I want you to serve supper up here for two (*They do not move A pause*) Did you hear what I said? I said—serve supper—supper—up here for two (*They salaam and exeunt softly*)

MCDUGAL The telegraph is in working order sir! (*He faces about and goes toward door L Just as he is about to exit—*)

MCGREGOR Sergeant

MCDUGAL (*stopping abruptly*) Y y yes sir!

MCGREGOR How many men on guard duty?

MCDUGAL (*in a surprised tone*) Seven sir! (*Pause*)

MCGREGOR Wake the others up!

MCDUGAL (*his tone more surprised*) B b beg p pardon sir!

MCGREGOR Double the sentries Put Neill and ten men on the ground floor with orders to let no one enter except women and civilians Take the rest yourself and string them along the walls North and West sides as much as possible towards the dome

MCDUGAL Yes sir! (*Is about to exit*) Pardon sir—but—but do you know when the regiment will be back?

MCGREGOR Can't say McDougal

MCDUGAL Thank you sir (*Is about to exit*)

MCGREGOR Sergeant!

MCDUGAL Yes sir!

MCGREGOR Lieutenant Hartley will take command. Kindly wake him up with my compliments and ask him up here

MCDUGAL Yes sir (*Exits*)
(*Drumming is heard again. SENTRY is seen to pass from R to L, then L to R. MCGREGOR still regards the corner of the carpet, the cigar between his teeth. Door L opens and LIEUTENANT HARTLEY enters, a tall fair haired English lad, garrulous and pink cheeked. He is buttoning his tunic and wears the expression of one who has been aroused from a deep sleep. He looks vaguely about for MCGREGOR but does not see him.*)

MCGREGOR Ah Hartley

HARTLEY (*in a thick sleepy voice*) Oh, there you are—didn't see where you were at first. Why in thunder—(*yawns*)—didn't you wake me up at this hour? Must be near one or two or something—your man bounced me out of bed as if the house was afire. (*Goes over to table and mixes brandy and soda*) And why have you moved up to this outlandish store room? (*Drinks glass, his voice becoming more awake*) Shifted all your things too! (*He pauses and then becoming wide awake he suddenly asks*) I say, McGreg, what's up?

MCGREGOR Listen!
(*The drumming a shade louder*)

HARTLEY Oh, that's the Mohurrum business, they're having. Guess the beggars will keep it up all night. They tell me it is a religious festival they hold here once a year. (*HARTLEY takes a few strides nearer MCGREGOR*) I say, you don't think there is anything nasty about it, do you?

MCGREGOR India is a queer place, Hartley.

HARTLEY By Jove—come to think of it—I—did you hear that queer rumor this morning?

MCGREGOR Rumors. You're all alike, you youngsters. I was the same myself once—well, out with it!

HARTLEY Something about a small cake—!

MCGREGOR (*sharply*) What?—Quick—where was it seen?

HARTLEY (*blithely*) The chaps I was talking to said that it was a sure sign that these devils meant mischief. They called it the fiery cross of India and they said that this little cake passes from hand to hand—from village to village—and the message which means mutiny and disaster flies faster than our telegraph!

MCGREGOR Oh, yes—I know all that—But where was it seen?

HARTLEY This morning on the steps of the Mission! (*A pause while HARTLEY watches face of MCGREGOR who goes on smoking. HARTLEY in an eager voice*) I say—by Jove—you don't think there's a chance for a row, do you?

MCGREGOR Hartley

HARTLEY Yes old chap?

MCGREGOR You are standing over forty tons of gunpowder!

HARTLEY (*standing back and looking down at the carpet*) What?

MCGREGOR Beneath you is the magazine!

HARTLEY The magazine! (*Stooping and lifting edge of carpet*) I didn't know it was here! Thought it was by the Colonel's quarters

MCGREGOR Hartley these Sepoys want that powder

HARTLEY Eh?

MCGREGOR I'm afraid they will be disappointed

HARTLEY I say McGregor—do you really think——

MCGREGOR The regiment is away—we don't know when it will be back. The town is full of strangers (*Pause*) Hartley there are women in this town—white women—English women

HARTLEY Rather. And by Jove there's my sister Mrs Clayton the widow—I hadn't thought of her!

MCGREGOR Well you see—I had, Hartley!

HARTLEY (*surprised*) Why what do you mean?

MCGREGOR Only that I bribed her woman—her faithful ayah—to bring her here tonight under some pretext or other. I expect her any minute now

HARTLEY I say that was clever of you! (*Pause* MCGREGOR goes over center for the first time and looks through archway. HARTLEY in a queer voice) You have known my sister Mrs Clayton a long time out here haven't you?

MCGREGOR I remember her before she left England—when you were still at Sandhurst

HARTLEY She used often to write me of you

MCGREGOR (*turning*) She did?

HARTLEY You have been a better friend to her than ever Clayton her husband was

MCGREGOR The man's dead Hartley

HARTLEY Oh yes I know—but it was all the mother's fault she ever married him (*Pause* HARTLEY goes over to MCGREGOR in a shy boyish manner) I say McGregor—give us a chance if there's a row?

MCGREGOR (*smiling*) I woke you up for that purpose. You'll take command of the walls in a few minutes. I don't trust anyone here except myself. That is why I had my things shifted (*Takes out watch*). The Colonel ought to be near Bandaggaar by this time. You stay here a moment—I'll telegraph along the line (*Goes toward the door at R*)

HARTLEY McGregor!

MCGREGOR Eh?

HARTLEY You're a brick to give a fellow such a chance—thanks!

MCGREGOR (*laughing*) Don't be too sanguine Hartley—it's a bad habit Perhaps after all this is nothing (*Exits into next room at R and after a moment is heard telegraphing*)

(HARTLEY takes another look at the magazine then goes to the center of the archway and listens a moment to the drumming which by fine degrees has grown louder The SENTRY passes at rear but doesn't see HARTLEY HARTLEY goes over R to business desk and idly looks over it Picks up a newspaper looks at it a moment and then drops it He sees writing materials upon the desk He seats himself spreads paper leans forward and dips pen in ink)

HARTLEY (*as he writes*) Dear mater This is the slowest station in Northern India there is nothing to do no society nothing! Sis is practically the only Englishwoman of any account, except the Major's wife and Mrs Indermaur By the way Captain McGregor my senior you remember him the chap Sis used to write us about Well he's a thoroughbred and dead nuts on Sis has been all his life it seems I think McGregor is the only man Sis ever cared a straw about but she won't have a word said against Clayton's memory (HARTLEY leans back in his chair lifting his pen and searching the ceiling for ideas Then leans forward and continues writing in silence)

(Door L softly opens and FIRST and SECOND SERVANTS glide noiselessly in walking as Orientals do, straight from the hips They move about quietly setting the table The drumming ceases suddenly The SERVANTS raise their heads slowly and

look deep into each other's eyes across the table They both come forward center without changing their relative positions or shifting their gaze from each other's eyes They stand center a moment listening Then a small white cake the size of a griddle cake flies through the archway and falls between the SERVANTS The FIRST SERVANT drops on one knee and covers the cake with his right hand and watches his companion SECOND SERVANT takes four deliberate steps backwards which brings him immediately behind HARTLEY who is deep in his letter SECOND SERVANT slowly draws from his bosom a pistol which he levels at HARTLEY'S neck about two feet distant HARTLEY blots letter with a satisfied air throws down pen leans far back in his chair which brings the muzzle of the pistol within two inches of his neck He passes his hand through his hair and reads *Reading in a satisfied air*)

and I always wear my flannels as you asked me to and take my two grains of quinine regularly I forgot to say in my last letter that Spiffy Watkins may have my cricket bat I shan't need it again but don't let anyone touch my fishing rod on any account! (*Leans forward to underline—any*) You needn't be anxious about me mother dear—there is no danger in India It's positively dull it's so safe Love to everybody—shall write the girls next mail Your affectionate son Alan Hartley P S—I repeat—don't let anyone touch my fishing rod

(The ticking of the telegraph is heard to stop suddenly SECOND SERVANT hides pistol in his bosom FIRST SERVANT rises and hides cake in his sash Both assume position at door L one immediately behind the

other—watching HARTLEY intently HARTLEY rises folds letter slips it into envelope and is about to lick it when he becomes aware of the two Indians staring at him He is taken aback They drop their eyes—salaam and exeunt together)

HARTLEY (*taking five paces after them and stopping with a startled expression*) By Gad I didn't know those men were in the room I wish these servant fellows would laugh or make a noise or anything—in stead of bowing and gliding about (*With a slight shudder*) Makes a fellow feel deuced uncanny!

MCGREGOR (*entering with papers which he throws on business desk then comes center sits*) Can't get the Colonel yet They haven't reached the station—or they have passed it

HARTLEY (*still looking after the servants*) I say McGregor do you trust those two servants of yours?

MCGREGOR (*laughing and coming forward*) Implicitly Come my dear boy take a seat and have some supper (*Motions HARTLEY to a seat opposite to him at the table*) I would trust those two men with my life

HARTLEY Well I suppose you know For myself I don't like them Fact is I never liked the looks of any of these vermin—they're so damned slippery

MCGREGOR Hartley may I give you a piece of advice?

HARTLEY (*taking a large piece of toast His mouth full*) Go ahead

MCGREGOR You are new to India—you have only joined the regiment three weeks and you have an imagination My boy quell it—stifle it—for if you let it grow in this hotbed of rumors and strange noises it will devour you! I have seen brave men made cowards by it Sherry?

HARTLEY Thanks (MCGREGOR *pours it out*) Perhaps you're right but talking of rumors—do tell me more about this chuppattie cake!

MCGREGOR Fact is no one knows much about them A chuppattie cake is the commonest thing in India Why it's the food of the people—it's their bread

HARTLEY These chaps told me it was a signal of mutiny—they told me of a sentence that went with it—do you know it?

MCGREGOR Sub lal hogga hi (*Pronounced Sub lal hoyarggi*)

HARTLEY And what does that mean pray?

MCGREGOR (*slowly*) Everything is to become red!

HARTLEY (*watching MCGREGOR who goes on calmly eating*) Do—do you believe in it?

MCGREGOR Depends Har ley where I saw one

HARTLEY What do you mean?

MCGREGOR If I saw a chuppattie in an out of the way place—

HARTLEY (*eagerly*) Yes?

MCGREGOR (*smiling*) India's a queer place Hartley (*Pause*) I remember when I was with a Sepoy regiment once the Colonel had us out on a surprise inspection one night and we found that a corporal had two chuppatties under his pillow (*Pause*) We had a narrow escape that night (*They both rise suddenly to their feet*)

HARTLEY Did you hear that?

MCGREGOR (*listening*) Yes

HARTLEY Sounded like sounded like a whistle!

MCGREGOR Sit down! (*They both sit down Enter the TWO HINDUSTANI SERVANTS with more dishes for dinner*)

MCGREGOR (*to FIRST SERVANT*) Abdul that lamp is smoking—turn it down

(*FIRST SERVANT crosses the stage to R to standing lamp which he lowers He listens all the while intently with his eyes fixed upon his companion who is immediately behind HARTLEY As he reaches center of stage on his return unnoticed by himself or any of the others the chuppattie falls from his sash to the floor near MCGREGOR Exeunt SERVANTS softly*)

HARTLEY (*using a siphon*) I don't like those two men!

MCGREGOR Oh you will get over that Hartley
(*Door L bursts open and SERGEANT MCDUGAL enters breathless—he salutes and stands*)

MCGREGOR (*going on eating*) Well McDougal?

MCDUGAL (*breathlessly*) Please sir—Mrs Cameron Miss Williams and five other ladies Mr Palmer and Judge Lawson with some civilian gentlemen have come into the walls sir! They seek protection sir! They're afraid of a rising sir!

MCGREGOR Ah! Is—is Mrs Clayton with them?

MCDUGAL N n no sir! P p please sir—what'll I do with them sir?

MCGREGOR (*thoughtfully*) Well I can't very well leave this room

HARTLEY (*rising abruptly*) I'll go!

MCGREGOR Sit down—I want you here Hartley! McDougal put the ladies in the Mess Room and see that they are properly cared for Give the gentlemen muskets and put them on the North Side as much as possible Lieut Hartley will take command in a few minutes McDougal!

MCDUGAL Yes sir! (*About to exit*)

MCGREGOR And McDougal—

MCDUGAL Yes sir!

MCGREGOR If Mrs Clayton comes show her up here

MCDUGAL Yes sir (*Salutes and exits*)

(*They go on eating in silence HARTLEY tries to hide his excitement and watches MCGREGOR excitedly At last with a great show of unconcern he drains his cup of coffee uses a napkin throws it down and speaks in an obviously careless manner*)

HARTLEY My sister You think she will get here safely?

MCGREGOR I have known this servant of heels for years Your sister will be here—don't you worry (*Rises—another pause HARTLEY tries again to hide his excitement*)

HARTLEY (*obviously making conversation*) I say McGregor—I am interested about these chuppattie cakes—tell me what does one look like?

MCGREGOR (*going over to business desk He gets cigar box from a drawer and returns across stage He pauses in the center and looks out into the moonlight*) Hartley I don't see that sentry! (*He remains silent a moment looking out then comes over to the table and throws the cigar box among the dishes*) Have a cheioot? (*Business of HARTLEY choosing one MCGREGOR puts a match into the candle and facing audience holds it in the air his eyes to the ceiling*) What's a chuppattie look like? Why let me see if I can describe it to you (*Lights cigar thoughtfully—then looks upon the floor match still burning in his right hand Sees cake at his feet Shakes out the lighted match slowly Puts it carefully in the saucer Takes a draw at his cigar all the while examining the cake intently*) Well it looks like a griddle cake it's thick—and—er—white (*Leans down and picks up with his right hand and weighs it*) Weighs about an ounce—looks deuced indigestible! (*HARTLEY at this word is in the act of lighting his cigar under the candle shade MCGREGOR carelessly throws cake on table and it falls with a clatter among the dishes*) Something like that Hartley

HARTLEY (*sternly back*) My God—how did that get here?

MCGREGOR (*looking over the heads of the audience*) I told you India was a queer place Hartley (*HARTLEY puts his cigar on his plate and watches MCGREGOR's face excitedly*)

MCGREGOR (*slowly*) The first thing to be done Hartley is to see if that sentry is there

HARTLEY (*quickly*) I'll go and see! (*Turns and runs towards arch*)

MCGREGOR Stop! (*HARTLEY stops abruptly*) Are you armed?

HARTLEY (*with a rising inflection*) Nol (*Looks about*)

MCGREGOR You will find one in the left hand drawer of my desk (*HARTLEY goes to desk opens drawer takes out pistol comes back center holding the pistol in front of him Is seen to collect himself square his shoulders and march out into the moonlight with military step Halts without his back to the audience*) What do you see?

HARTLEY All the men seem to be at their posts I see Mr Palmer and Judge Lawson—they have given them muskets

MCGREGOR And Stewart—the sentry? (*HARTLEY disappears R of archway then returns at a run He arrives breathless at MCGREGOR's side*)

HARTLEY (*in a whisper*) They've cut his throat!

MCGREGOR Hartley! Hartley! (*Draws his cigar sharply from his mouth Pause*) Hartley would you mind going into that room and telegraphing?

HARTLEY (*flying to the door R breathless with excitement*) What will I say?

MCGREGOR Get Bandagaa
If they don't answer get Sir John at Hadraa then the Bulbud Residency Repeat the one word "massacre" till someone answers you! (*Exit HARTLEY banging the door Then the sound of the machine repeating the same message over and over again Drumming begins again MCGREGOR stands a moment longer looking over the heads of the audience then goes quickly to the business desk and begins pulling out with feverish hurry papers and documents which he tears to pieces His cigar between his teeth Door L opens with a bang and the TWO HINDUSTANI SERVANTS burst into the room wildly searching for the lost chuppattie cake FIRST SERVANT is seen feeling in his sash MCGREGOR turns sharply around*) What the devil—(*SERVANTS immediately salaam and make a pretense of going towards the table*) Oh yes we have finished—you may clear away the things (*He turns his back to them and goes on tearing up the papers As soon as his back is turned FIRST SERVANT signals through door at L and out troop all the other SERVANTS They tiptoe down stage all with their eyes on MCGREGOR'S back They pass through arch and one by one leap lightly over the parapet and out of sight When all have gone—MCGREGOR speaks through his teeth still tearing up his papers his back to the empty stage*) Look here you men—I didn't like the way you burst into the room just now! (*Pause he goes on tearing up papers*) What did you mean by it? (*Pause*) I said what did you mean

by it? (*He turns sharply*) Look here when I ask a question I expect an answer (*The words die on his lips as he sees the empty stage Stands silent a moment looking at the untouched supper table Then takes three deliberate steps backwards which brings him to R of arch He raises his hand and unhook one of the Indian swords that decorates the wall and throws it lightly on the desk within easy reach He then leans comfortably on the side of the archway looking out into the moonlight smoking his cigar A sound of running feet approaching MCGREGOR'S hand is seen to move towards the sword on the desk He continues smoking and looking out*)

A WOMAN'S VOICE Captain McGregor! Captain McGregor! (*MCGREGOR removes the cigar from his mouth and gives a quick look at the magazine door Then breathless and half crying with excitement MRS CLAYTON enters wildly and leans fainting against wall L of archway She covers her eyes with her arm*)

MRS CLAYTON (*wildly*) Captain McGregor your men your men showed me up here the town is rising! Save me! Save me!

MCGREGOR (*in a polite voice carefully putting cigar out in a small ashtray beside him on the desk*) Why, how do you do Mrs Clayton?

MRS CLAYTON No—no—no—the Sepoys—they're rising—where is my brother?—I escaped just in time!

MCGREGOR (*wheeling an easy chair towards her*) I know but won't you

sit down! Your brother is here
in the next room

MRS CLAYTON Can't you hear
them? they're coming
we'll all be massacred!

MCGREGOR Come Mrs Clayton
(*Forces her gently into a chair*) Sit
down Your nerves are all awry
Calm yourself!

MRS CLAYTON Calm myself!
Listen! (*They listen a moment to
the drumming*)

MCGREGOR (*going over to the table
taking a decanter with which he
fills a small glass*) Why you know
what that is Mrs Clayton it's the
Mohurrum business—religious af-
fair—pious riot—quite harmless
Won't you try some of my sherry?
(*Offers glass*)

MRS CLAYTON (*waving glass aside*)
Captain McGregor the natives are
pouring into the town by thousands!
They are collecting at the bazaar!
There is danger! I feel it here! (*Puts
hand on heart*)

MCGREGOR Do you think Mrs
Clayton that if there was much
danger I would be here enjoying a
cigar alone?

MRS CLAYTON I—I—I—suppose
—after all—I—I—I—I—I have let my
nerves get the better of me
but oh Captain McGregor—just as
I was going to bed I began to hear
that horrid queer noise they are
making! (*Listens a moment*) I
called Rebottie—you know her—
my faithful ayah Well she told me
that all the servants had fled!

MCGREGOR (*laughing*) You can no
more keep a native from a Mohur-
rum than a small boy from a circus
My servants have left me too!

MRS CLAYTON But this kind of
thing never happened to me before!
We flew to the stables to saddle our
own horses but they were all gone
—they had taken them too So
we ran here on foot—choosing the
back street I could see the town
was full of strangers—they are
pouring from all quarters! When we
came to your gates they sent me up
here!

MCGREGOR They did right—but
after all this you must calm your-
self (*Gives her the glass again
which she reluctantly drinks While
she is in the act he turns his head
slowly and looks through the arch-
way*)

MRS CLAYTON (*weakly*) I'm afraid
I've made an awful fool of myself
You'll have to forgive me Captain
McGregor You know really I am
not often frightened but India has
always been a land of horror to me
Full of sounds and strange noises—
terrible—terrible silences and
always those eyes looking at you!
One can't help thinking of what
these Sepoys will do when they are
once let loose! Remember that Oude
massacre Massacre! Massa-
cre! I can't get that word out
of my brain

MCGREGOR (*still listening and not
looking up*) Come—rest a bit
You're worn out!

MRS CLAYTON (*suddenly after a
pause*) But I can't stay here—it's
late! If you really think Captain
McGregor that there is no cause

for alarm will you forgive a silly woman and let her return home?

MCGREGOR (*slowly*) Won't you stay a bit? Your brother is here

MRS CLAYTON I'd like to (*laughing*)—but it's growing very late!

MCGREGOR Then I'll call Stewart and have him take you home (*Goes toward arch thinking deeply Then stopping*) By the way won't you in the meantime play me some thing on my new piano? I had it shifted up here with my other things—I want you to try it for me (*Reluctant yet to humor him she pulls off her gloves and goes to wards the piano She pauses to put her gloves upon the table and sees the chuppattie cake lying among the dishes She turns quickly with a face full of horror to MCGREGOR who is leaning against the archway and looking out*)

MRS CLAYTON (*in an awed and in tense voice*) How did this get here?

MCGREGOR Eh? Oh the chuppattie Why you know I rather like them Always have them for supper I'm quite an Indian in my tastes

MRS CLAYTON (*with a short laugh of relief*) You must think I'm an awful coward—but you know the rumor of these cakes and that awful sentence All is to become red! (*Stands still looking down at it with a frightened face*)

MCGREGOR Come—you have been badly frightened and I don't blame you Do try my piano and forget for a moment this country which you detest so heartily!

(MRS CLAYTON goes over to the piano seats herself and commences playing THE WATER LILY softly and with deep feeling The drum ming goes on HARTLEY is heard repeating the one word incessantly on the telegraph MCGREGOR keeps his position at the side of the archway looking out MRS CLAYTON plays for some time in silence)

MRS CLAYTON (*stopping abruptly and in a queer voice*) Did you call that man to take me home Captain McGregor?

MCGREGOR Yes

MRS CLAYTON I didn't hear you

MCGREGOR (*coming down stage and leaning over the edge of the piano*) He will be here in a moment (*She goes on playing again looking up at him His voice changes to one of emotion*) That was the melody you played at the Maharajah's ball

MRS CLAYTON You remember that?

MCGREGOR Remember! My life is made up of memories (*Pause*) I remember the day when a fresh young English girl arrived on the decks of a great East Indiaman—and how we cheered her pretty face! I remember a military wedding at Calcutta and Mrs Jack Clayton the toast of the regiment And then I remember when I first saw you in mourning I remember many things! (*Sighs Here a long pause MCGREGOR turns his face slowly and looks through archway*)

MRS CLAYTON (*her voice low and full*) You have been a loyal friend! (*She plays*)

MCGREGOR (*turning to her with a smile*) How wonderfully you play! (*A pause*) What a strange and beautiful thing awakened memory is! One can live again those hours one has thought forever lost Do you—can you—remember and live over those wonderful days—in the old bungalow by the river—the queer lights and tall shadows—when in the gaiety of your heart you called me Major Dobbins?

MRS CLAYTON Because you were so awkward and were always upsetting my tea cups and things—oh yes—I remember

MCGREGOR I thought you called me Major Dobbins because I was so faithful

MRS CLAYTON Perhaps I did (*She plays on a moment and then stops and sits looking out into the moonlight in silence MCGREGOR watching her intently the while*) What a dear fellow you were Major Dobbins! Ah a woman never forgets a man's friendship in a time like that—and it seems I can never get the chance—(*turning to him*) to thank you enough!

MCGREGOR Thank me! Why I stood by you as you call it because I couldn't help myself—because you're the only woman worthy of the name because you took your trouble like a thoroughbred because because you are beautiful because you're straight and tall and your hair is brown because you're true and clean hearted because old friend I have loved you all my life!

MRS CLAYTON (*her voice broken*) Major Dobbins!

MCGREGOR (*coming to her side and kneeling on one knee*) Aye—Major Dobbins—as ever was!

MRS CLAYTON (*putting her hand on his shoulder and looking down into his eyes*) You know way down deep in your heart that you were the first and only one—and now old friend tried and trusted—after all these years of silence and pain—here is your reward (*With a low laugh*) A poor thing Major but myself—my honor—my life—my—my—(*tenderly drawing his head with both hands to her bosom and putting her lips to his hair*) my Major Dobbins!

(MCGREGOR raises his head and their lips meet MCGREGOR then stands straight and breathes deep)

MCGREGOR It was worth it—it was worth the waiting for! (*The sound of a chair being violently overturned in room at R*)

MRS CLAYTON What is that? (*Door bursts open and HARTLEY bursts in*)

HARTLEY (*shouting*) McGregor! McGregor!

MCGREGOR (*going quickly up to him and speaking in a calm rapid voice*) Ah Hartley (*Turning*) here is Mrs Clayton your sister she sought our protection thinking that perhaps this Mohurum was a Sepoy rising but I have assured her that there is no cause for alarm

HARTLEY (*breathlessly*) It's all right, Sis you needn't be alarmed —I—I—I—if there had been any danger we would have heard of it

MRS CLAYTON You must forgive us poor women our cowardice Alan—it is only when we realize our helplessness that we are frightened Sometimes I wish that I were a man—a soldier—a Highlander like yourselves—instead of a woman who has to wait and listen and listen and listen!

HARTLEY (*blatantly*) It is not all beer and skittles being a man I can assure you Sis Why do you know—just now !

MCGREGOR (*sharply*) Hartley!

HARTLEY Eh?

MCGREGOR Would you kindly take a message for me?

HARTLEY Pardon me Sis
(*She inclines her head and goes on playing her eyes to the keys* HARTLEY goes over to MCGREGOR and both watch her as they speak)

MCGREGOR (*in an undertone*) Well what is it?

HARTLEY (*in an excited whisper*) They have cut the wires!

MCGREGOR Ah—I thought as much!

HARTLEY Sir John says, don't let them get the powder!

MCGREGOR He needn't worry

MRS CLAYTON (*stopping her playing and looking up*) Is your man ready Captain McGregor? (*Po-lutely*) It is growing very late!

MCGREGOR I am sending your brother to hurry him up
(MRS CLAYTON goes on playing)

HARTLEY (*to MCGREGOR*) Well?

MCGREGOR You'll take command now at once as they will be on us in a moment Hold them off as long as possible I'll stay here and watch that powder (*Points to the corner of the carpet*) I daren't trust any one in this room except myself If they once get over the walls

HARTLEY We're lost!

MCGREGOR If they once do Hartley

HARTLEY Yes?

MCGREGOR Have the bugler sound the charge so that I can hear it Make him play it loudly mind you!

HARTLEY And then—?

MCGREGOR I shall blow up the magazine!

HARTLEY By Jove—

MCGREGOR Quick—say a word to your sister and go!
(HARTLEY backs down stage watching MCGREGOR who is looking out into the moonlight—he feels the air behind him for his sister)

HARTLEY (*as he reaches her* She continues to play) I say Sis I'm going for the man I won't be back myself—he'll see you safe home I want to say good—good night!

MRS CLAYTON (*continuing her music*) Good night, old fellow!

HARTLEY Sis?

MRS CLAYTON (*stopping and looking around*) Yes, Alan?

HARTLEY Pardon my asking but—
has McGregor said anything to you?

MRS CLAYTON (*looking up and smiling*) Yes

HARTLEY (*with enthusiasm*) I'm glad! (*Bending and kissing her tenderly*) Good night old girl!

MRS CLAYTON Good night my brother!

HARTLEY (*goes up to MCGREGOR and gives him his hand in silence*) I congratulate you By Jove you are a brick (*Lower*) Good bye!

(MCGREGOR gives him his hand in silence and HARTLEY exits drawing his pistol MCGREGOR remains a moment looking after him and then comes down stage and leans on the piano and watches MRS CLAYTON as she continues to play softly A Sepoy's head and shoulders rise up stealthily from behind the balustrade—beyond the arch First an arm appearing then a turban and then a white trousered leg is thrown over the balustrade MCGREGOR turns quickly and sees the Sepoy who instantly drops out of sight MRS CLAYTON has seen nothing and continues playing dreamily MCGREGOR goes at once to the desk and quickly opens a drawer and takes out a black coil of fuse He comes down center He throws back the corner of the carpet opens the magazine door, gives a quick look through the archway and lowers one end of the fuse deep into the magazine)

MRS CLAYTON (*not looking up*) Ah! I'm so happy Tell me, dear, you like my brother?

MCGREGOR (*backing and uncoiling fuse*) Rather! (MCGREGOR leaves end of fuse near center)

MRS CLAYTON I suppose India will spoil him like all the rest—but it's like a breath of old England to see his boyish honest face!

MCGREGOR Rather (*He says this as he is in the act of taking one of the silver candlesticks removes the shade and places it with the lighted candle near the end of the fuse*)

MRS CLAYTON I remember when I first saw India—how terrified I was—the bronze and blackened faces (*She happens to look around She stops playing and rises slowly MCGREGOR is standing over the lighted candle with his hands rammed in his coat pockets He is looking out into the moonlight She looks from him to the open magazine and back to him again*)

MRS CLAYTON What are you doing?

MCGREGOR (*turning his face to wards the audience*) You will pardon me—I have lied to you I am afraid after all there is danger (*A pause—MRS CLAYTON remains perfectly still*) I thought perhaps I'd spare you unnecessary alarm but I'm afraid I can't—you see the regiment is not on time I know you for a thoroughbred—you've the blood of soldiers in your veins So I can tell you plainly how we stand?

MRS CLAYTON (*after drawing a quick breath*) Tell me!

MCGREGOR That door you see open is the powder magazine You know what it means if these Sepoys

capture it—You know what it means if I let them capture you You know what it means when they get an Englishwoman in their power! My Highlanders will hold them off as long as possible and if they fail you see my duty?

MRS CLAYTON (*after a pause while she struggles with herself*) Yes!

MCGREGOR I thought it would seem a hard thing to do but with you beside me—why girl I am going to blow up that magazine Will you stand by me?

MRS CLAYTON With my last breath! (*The sound of musket shooting without rapid and terrifying*)

MCGREGOR Ah they've begun already! (*They stand listening*) Tell me if you hear the bugle call! (*The noise without becomes deafening Savage yells hoots and firing The sky through the archway turns scarlet as if the city were afire Suddenly the standing lamp at R is shot to pieces by a stray bullet* MRS CLAYTON screams but still stands beside piano) What's that? (*They listen A sudden lull in the battle and a tiny call is heard gallantly playing in the distance* MCGREGOR slowly leans down and takes the lighted candlestick in his hand and looks up at MRS CLAYTON She goes

to him He then slowly and carefully touches the fuse with the lighted candle It burns with great display towards the magazine Together they watch the fuse as it hisses and splutters towards the yawning pit The noise without becomes deafening The red light flares more brilliantly—when suddenly the noise stops Dead silence)

MRS CLAYTON (*dashes for MCGREGOR'S side*) Stop it! Stop it! (*She flies to the fuse and stamps it out*) Can't you hear it? Listen!

(*Pause They both listen Then far away in the distance is heard five drum and bagpipes playing The Campbells Are Coming Ye Ho Ye Ho It swells louder at each approaching step* HARTLEY enters wildly his coat torn off his back he carries his smoking revolver, which he waves madly)

HARTLEY (*hoarsely and with excitement*) McGregor—McGregor—it's all right! The Highlanders are here! We're saved—saved! (*Exits reeling and shouting*)

(MCGREGOR puts the candle out by striking the flame with his open palm and catches MRS CLAYTON just as she faints falling backwards into his arms Curtain falls on this tableau now lit with red fire smoke and resounding with rousing British cheers, drums and bagpipes)

CURTAIN

Helena's Husband

AN HISTORICAL COMEDY

BY PHILIP MOELLER

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CHARACTERS

HELENA *the Queen*

TSUMU *a black woman slave to Helena*

MENELAUS *the King*

ANALYTIKOS *the King's librarian*

PARIS *a shepherd*

HELENA'S HUSBAND

SCENE is that archaeological mystery a Greek interior A door on the right leads to the King's library one on the left to the apartment of the Queen Back right is the main entrance leading to the palace Next thus running the full length of the wall is a window with a platform built out over the main court Beyond is a view of hills bright with lemon groves and in the far distance shimmers the sea On the wall near the Queen's room hangs an old shield rusty with disuse A bust of Zeus stands on a pedestal against the right wall There are low coffers about the room from which hang the ends of vivid colored robes The scene is bathed in intense sunlight TSUMU is massaging the Queen

HELENA There's no doubt about it

TSUMU Analytikos says there is much doubt about all things

HELENA Never mind what he says I envy you your complexion

TSUMU (*falling prostrate before HELENA*) Whom the Queen envies should beware

HELENA (*annoyed*) Get up Tsumu You make me nervous tumbling about like that

TSUMU (*still on floor*) Why does the great Queen envy Tsumu?

HELENA Get up you silly (*She kicks her*) I envy you because you can run about and never worry about getting sunburnt

TSUMU (*on her knees*) The radiant beauty of the Queen is unspoilable

HELENA That's just what's worrying me Tsumu When beauty is so perfect the slightest jar may mean a jolt (*She goes over and looks at her reflection in the shield*) I can't see myself as well as I would like to The King's shield is tarnished

Menelaus has been too long out of battle

TSUMU (*handing her a hand mirror*) The Gods will keep Sparta free from strife

HELENA I'll have you beaten if you assume that prophetic tone with me There's one thing I can't stand and that's a know all (*Flinging the hand mirror to the floor*)

TSUMU (*in alarm*) Gods grant you haven't bent it

HELENA These little mirrors are useless His shield is the only thing in which I can see myself full length If he only went to war he'd have to have it cleaned

TSUMU (*putting the mirror on a table near the Queen*) The King is a lover of peace

HELENA The King is a lover of comfort Have you noticed that he spends more time than he used to in the library?

TSUMU He is busy with questions of State

HELENA You know perfectly well that when anything's the matter with the Government it's always straightened out at the other end of the palace. Finish my shoulder (*She examines her arm*). I doubt if there is a finer skin than this in Sparta.

(Tsumu begins to massage the Queen's shoulder)

HELENA (*taking up a mirror*) That touch of deep carmine right here in the center of my lips was quite an idea.

Tsumu (*busily pounding the Queen*) An inspiration of the Gods!

HELENA The Gods have nothing to do with it. I copied it from a low woman I saw at the circus. I can't understand how these bad women have such good ideas. (HELENA twists about)

Tsumu If Your Majesty doesn't sit still I may pinch you.

HELENA (*boxing her ears*) None of your tricks, you ebony fiend!

Tsumu (*crouching*) Descendant of paradise, forgive me.

HELENA If you bruise my perfect flesh the King will kill you. My beauty is his religion. He can sit for hours as if at prayer, just examining the arch of my foot. Tsumu, you may kiss my foot.

Tsumu (*prostrate*) May the Gods make me worthy of your kindness!

HELENA That's enough. Tsumu, are you married?

Tsumu (*getting up*) I've been so

busy having babies I never had time to get married.

HELENA It's a great disillusionment.

Tsumu (*aghast*) What!

HELENA I'm not complaining. Moo Moo is the best of husbands but sometimes being adored too much is trying. (*She sighs deeply*) I think I'll wear my heliotrope this afternoon.

(A trumpet sounds below in the courtyard. Tsumu goes to the window.)

Tsumu They are changing the guards at the gates of the palace. It's almost time for your bath. (*She begins scraping the massage ointment back into the box*.)

HELENA You're as careful with that ointment as Moo Moo is with me.

Tsumu Precious things need precious guarding.

HELENA It's very short sighted on Moo Moo's part to send everybody to the galleys who dares lift a head when I pass by—and all these nice looking soldiers! Why—the only men I ever see besides Moo Moo are Analytikos and a lot of useless eunuchs.

Tsumu Oh those eunuchs!

HELENA (*as she sits dreaming*) I wish I wish— (*She stops short*.)

Tsumu You have but to speak your desire to the King.

HELENA (*shocked*) Tsumu! How can you think of such a thing? I'm not a bad woman.

TSUMU He would die for you

bursts into a loud peal of laughter and MENELAUS rushes into the room

HELENA (*relieved*) Ah! Do you think so Tsumu?

TSUMU All Sparta knows that His Majesty is a lover of peace and yet he would rush into battle to save you

MENELAUS (*in high irritation*) I wish you wouldn't make so much noise in here A King might at least expect quiet in his own palace

HELENA I should love to have men fighting for me

HELENA Tsumu see if my bath is ready (*Tsumu exits*) You used not speak like that to me Moo Moo

TSUMU (*in high alarm*) May Zeus turn a deaf ear to your voice

MENELAUS (*in a temper*) How many times must I tell you that my name is Menelaus and that it isn't Moo Moo?

HELENA Don't be impertinent Tsumu I've got to have some sort of amusement

HELENA (*sweetly*) I'll never do it again Moo Moo (*She giggles*)

TSUMU You've only to wait till next week and you can see another of the priestesses sacrificed to Diana

MENELAUS Your laugh gets on my nerves It's louder than it used to be

HELENA That doesn't interest me any longer The girls are positively beginning to like it No! My mind is set on war

HELENA If you wish it I'll never never laugh again

TSUMU (*terrified*) I have five fathers of my children to lose

MENELAUS You've promised that too often

HELENA War or—or—

HELENA (*sadly*) Things are not as they used to be

TSUMU (*hopefully*) Have I been so long your slave that I no longer know your wish?

MENELAUS Are you going to start that again?

HELENA (*very simply*) Well I should like to have a lover

HELENA (*with a tinge of melancholy*) I suppose you'd like me to be still and sad

TSUMU (*springs up and rushes over in horror to draw the curtains across the door of the library All of a tremble*) Gods grant they didn't hear you

MENELAUS (*bitterly*) Is it too much to hope that you might be still and happy?

HELENA Don't be alarmed Tsumu Analytikos is over eighty (*She*

HELENA (*speaking very quickly and tragically*) Don't treat me cruelly Moo Moo You don't understand me No man ever really understands a woman There are terrible depths

to my nature I had a long talk with Dr Æsculapius only last week and he told me I'm too introspective It's the curse of us emotional women I'm really quite worried but much you care much you care (*A note of tears comes into her voice*) I'm sure you don't love me any more Moo Moo No! No! Don't answer me! If you did you couldn't speak to me the way you do I've never wronged you in deed or in thought No never—never I've given up my hopes and aspirations because I knew you wanted me around you And now NOW— (*She can contain the tears no longer*) Because I have neglected my beauty and because I am old and ugly you regret that Ulysses or Agamemnon didn't marry me when you all wanted me and I know you curse the day you ever saw me (*She is breathless*)

MENELAUS (*fuming*) Well! Have you done?

HELENA No I could say a great deal more but I'm not a talkative woman
(ANALYTIKOS comes in from the library)

ANALYTIKOS Your Majesty are we to read no longer today?

HELENA I have something to say to the King
(ANALYTIKOS goes toward the library MENELAUS anxiously stops him)

MENELAUS No Stay here You are a wise man and well understand the wisdom of the Queen

ANALYTIKOS (*bowing to HELENA*) Helena is wise as she is beautiful.

MENELAUS She is attempting to prove to me in a thousand words that she's a silent woman

ANALYTIKOS Women are seldom silent (*HELENA resents this*) Their beauty is forever speaking for them

HELENA The years have indeed taught you wisdom
(TSUMU enters)

TSUMU The almond water awaits Your Majesty

HELENA I hope you haven't forgotten the chiropodist

TSUMU He has been commanded but he's always late He's so busy

HELENA (*in a purring tone to MENELAUS*) Moo Moo
(MENELAUS bored turns away)

HELENA (*to TSUMU*) I think after all I'll wear my Sicily blue (*She and TSUMU go into the Queen's apartment*)

ANALYTIKOS Shall we go back to the library?

MENELAUS My mind is unhinged again—that woman with her endless protestations

ANALYTIKOS I am sorry the poets no longer divert you

MENELAUS A little poetry is always too much

ANALYTIKOS Tomorrow we will try the historians

MENELAUS No! Not the historians I want the truth for a change

ANALYTIKOS The truth!

MENELAUS Where in books can I find escape from the grim reality of being hitched for life to such a wife? Bah!

ANALYTIKOS Philosophy teaches—

MENELAUS Why have the Gods made woman necessary to man and made them fools?

ANALYTIKOS For seventy years I have been resolving the problem of woman and even at my age—

MENELAUS Give it up old man The answer is—don't

ANALYTIKOS Such endless variety and yet—

MENELAUS (*with the conviction of finality*) There are only two sorts of women! Those who are failures and those who realize it

ANALYTIKOS Is not Penelope the model wife of your cousin Ulysses an exception?

MENELAUS Duty is the refuge of the unbeautiful She is as commonplace as she is ugly (*And then with deep bitterness*) Why didn't he marry Helen when we all wanted her? He was too wise for that He is the only man I've ever known who seems able to direct destiny

ANALYTIKOS You should not blame the Gods for a lack of will

MENELAUS (*shouting*) Will! Heaven knows I do not lack the will to rid myself of this painted puppet, but where is the instrument ready to my hand?

(*At this moment a Shepherd of Apollonian beauty leaps across the rail of the balcony and bounds into the room MENELAUS and ANALYTIKOS start back in amazement*)

ANALYTIKOS Who are you?

PARIS An adventurer

ANALYTIKOS Then you have reached the end of your story In a moment you will die

PARIS I have no faith in prophets

ANALYTIKOS The soldiers of the King will give you faith Don't you know that it means death for any man to enter the apartments of the Queen?

PARIS (*looking from one to the other*) Oh! So you're a couple of eunuchs

(*Though nearly eighty this is too much for ANALYTIKOS to bear He rushes to call the guard but MENELAUS stops him*)

PARIS (*to ANALYTIKOS*) Thanks

ANALYTIKOS You thank me for telling you your doom?

PARIS No—for convincing me that I'm where I want to be It's taken me a long while but I knew I'd get here (*And then very intimately to MENELAUS*) Where's the Queen?

MENELAUS Where do you come from?

PARIS From the hills I had come down into the market place to sell my sheep I had my hood filled with apples They were golden red like a thousand sunsets

MENELAUS (*annoyed*) You might skip those bucolic details

PARIS At the fair I met three ancient gypsies

MENELAUS What have they to do with you coming here?

PARIS You don't seem very patient. Can't I tell my story in my own way? They asked me for the apple I was eating and I asked them what they'd give for it.

MENELAUS I'm not interested in market quotations.

PARIS You take everything so literally. I'm sure you're easily bored.

MENELAUS (*with meaning*) I am.

PARIS (*going on cheerfully*) The first was to give me all the money she could beg and the second was to tell me all the truth she could learn by listening and the third promised me a pretty girl. So I chose— (*He hesitates*)

ANALYTIKOS You cannot escape by spinning out your tale.

PARIS Death is the end of one story and the beginning of another.

MENELAUS Well! Well! Come to the point. Which did you choose?

PARIS (*smiling*) Well, you see I'd been in the hills for a long while so I picked the girl.

ANALYTIKOS It would have been better for you if you had chosen wisdom.

PARIS I knew you'd say that.

ANALYTIKOS I have spoken truly. In a moment you will die.

PARIS It is because the old have forgotten life that they preach wisdom.

MENELAUS So you chose the girl? Well, go on.

PARIS This made the other cronies angry and when I tossed her the apple one of the others yelped at me. 'You may as well seek the Queen of Sparta; she is the fairest of women.' And as I turned away I heard their laughter but the words had set my heart aflame and though it cost me my life I'll follow the adventure.

ANALYTIKOS (*scandalized*) Haven't we heard enough of this?

MENELAUS (*deeply*) No! I want to hear how the story ends. It may amuse the King. (*He makes a sign to ANALYTIKOS*)

PARIS And on the ship at night I looked long at the stars and dreamed of possessing Helen.
(ANALYTIKOS makes an involuntary movement toward the balcony but MENELAUS stops him.)

PARIS Desire has been my guiding Mercury; the Fates are with me and here I am.

ANALYTIKOS The wrath of the King will show you no mercy.

PARIS (*nonchalantly*) I'm not afraid of the King. He's fat and—a fool.

ANALYTIKOS Shall I call the guards? (MENELAUS stops him.)

MENELAUS (*very significantly*) So you would give your life for a glimpse of the Queen?

PARIS (*swiftly*) Yes! My immortal soul and if the fables tell the truth the sight will be worth the forfeit

MENELAUS (*suddenly jumping up*) It shall be as you wish!

PARIS (*buoyantly*) Venus has smiled on me

MENELAUS In there beyond the library you will find a room with a bath Wait there till I call you

PARIS Is this some trick to catch me?

MENELAUS A Spartan cannot lie

PARIS What will happen to you if the King hears of this?

MENELAUS I will answer for the King Go
(PARIS exits into the library)

ANALYTIKOS (*rubbing his hands*) Shall I order the boiling oil?

MENELAUS (*surprised*) Oil?

ANALYTIKOS Now that he is being cleaned for the sacrifice

MENELAUS His torture will be greater than being boiled alive

ANALYTIKOS (*eagerly*) You'll have him hurled from the wall of the palace to a forest of waiting spears below?

MENELAUS None is so blind as he who sees too much

ANALYTIKOS Your Majesty is subtle in his cruelty

MENELAUS Haven't the years taught you the cheapness of revenge?

ANALYTIKOS (*mystified*) You do not intend to alter destiny

MENELAUS Never before has destiny been so clear to me

ANALYTIKOS Then the boy must die

MENELAUS (*with slow determination*) No! He has been sent by the Gods to save me!

ANALYTIKOS Your Majesty! (*He is trembling with apprehension*)

MENELAUS (*with unbudgeable conviction*) Helena must elope with him!

ANALYTIKOS (*falling into a seat*) Ye Gods!

MENELAUS (*quietly*) I couldn't divorce the Queen That would set a bad example

ANALYTIKOS Yes very

MENELAUS I couldn't desert her That would be beneath my honor

ANALYTIKOS (*deeply*) Was there no other way?

MENELAUS (*pompously*) The King can do no wrong and besides I hate the smell of blood Are you a prophet as well as a scholar? Will she go?

ANALYTIKOS Tonight I will read the stars

MENELAUS (*meaningfully*) By tonight I'll not need you to tell me
(ANALYTIKOS sits deep in thought)
Well?

ANALYTIKOS Ethics cite no precedent

MENELAUS Do you mean to say I'm not justified?

ANALYTIKOS (*cogitating*) Who can establish the punctilious ratio between necessity and desire?

MENELAUS (*beginning to fume*) This is no time for language Just put yourself in my place

ANALYTIKOS Being you how can I judge as I?

MENELAUS (*losing control*) May you choke on your dialectics! Zeus himself could have stood it no longer

ANALYTIKOS Have you given her soul a chance to grow?

MENELAUS Her soul indeed! Its shut in her rouge pot (*He has been strutting about Suddenly he sits down crushing a roll of papyrus He takes it up and in utter disgust reads*) The perfect hip its development and permanence Bahl (*He flings it to the floor*) I've done what I had to do and Gods grant the bait may be sweet enough to catch the Queen

ANALYTIKOS If you had diverted yourself with a war or two you might have forgotten your troubles at home

MENELAUS (*frightened*) I detest dissension of any kind—my dream was perpetual peace in comfortable domesticity with a womanly woman to warm my sandals

ANALYTIKOS Is not the Queen—?

MENELAUS No! No! The whole world is but her mirror And I'm expected to face that woman every morning at breakfast for the rest of my life and by Venus that's more than even a King can bear!

ANALYTIKOS Even a King cannot alter destiny I warn you whom the Gods have joined together—

MENELAUS (*in an outburst*) Is for man to break asunder!

ANALYTIKOS (*deeply shocked*) You talk like an atheist

MENELAUS I never allow religion to interfere with life Go call the victim and see that he be left alone with the Queen

(*MENELAUS exits and ANALYTIKOS goes over to the door of the library and summons PARIS who enters clad in a gorgeous robe*)

PARIS I found this in there It looks rather well doesn't it? Ah! So you're alone I suppose that stupid friend of yours has gone to tell the King When do I see the Queen?

ANALYTIKOS At once (*He goes to the door of the Queen's apartment and claps his hand* TSUMU enters and at the sight of her PARIS recoils the full length of the room)

PARIS I thought the Queen was a blonde!

ANALYTIKOS Tell Her Majesty a stranger awaits her here (*TSUMU exits, her eyes wide on PARIS*) You should thank the Gods for this moment

PARIS (*his eyes on the door*) You do it for me I can never remember all their names

(HELENA enters clad in her Sicily blue crowned with a garland of golden flowers She and PARIS stand riveted looking at each other Their attitude might be described as fantastic ANALYTİKOS watches them for a moment and then with hands and head lifted to heaven he goes into the library)

PARIS (*quivering with emotion*) I have the most strange sensation of having seen you before Something I can't explain—

HELENA (*quite practically*) Please don't bother about all sorts of fine distinctions Under the influence of Analytikos and my husband life has become a mess of indecision I'm a simple direct woman and I expect you to say just what you think

PARIS Do you? Very well then— (*He comes a step nearer to her*) Fate is impelling me toward you

HELENA Yes That's much better So you're a fatalist It's very Greek I don't see what our dramatists would do without it

PARIS In my country there are no dramatists We are too busy with reality

HELENA Your people must be uncivilized barbarians

PARIS My people are a genuine people There is but one thing we worship

HELENA Don't tell me it's money

PARIS It's—

HELENA Analytikos says if there weren't any money there wouldn't be any of those ridiculous socialists

PARIS It isn't money It's sincerity

HELENA I too believe in sincerity It's the loveliest thing in the world

PARIS And the most dangerous

HELENA The truth is never dangerous

PARIS Except when told

HELENA (*making room on the couch for him to sit next to her*) You mustn't say wicked things to me

PARIS Can your theories survive a test?

HELENA (*beautifully*) Truth is eternal and survives all tests

PARIS No Perhaps after all your soul is not ready for the supremest heights

HELENA Do you mean to say I'm not religious? Religion teaches the meaning of love

PARIS Has it taught you to love your husband?

HELENA (*starting up and immediately sitting down again*) How dare you speak to me like that?

PARIS You see I was right (*He goes toward the balcony*)

HELENA (*stopping him*) Whatever made you think so?

PARIS I've heard people talk of the King You could never love a man like that

HELENA (*beautifully*) A woman's first duty is to love her husband.

PARIS There is a higher right than duty

HELENA (*with conviction*) Right is right

PARIS (*with admiration*) The world has libeled you

HELENA Me! The Queen?

PARIS You are as wise as you are beautiful

HELENA (*smiling coyly*) Why you hardly know me

PARIS I know you! I better than all men

HELENA You?

PARIS (*rapturously*) Human law has given you to Menelaus but divine law makes you mine

HELENA (*in amazement*) What!

PARIS I alone appreciate your beauty I alone can reach your soul

HELENA Ah!

PARIS You hate your husband!

HELENA (*drawing back*) Why do you look at me like that?

PARIS To see if there's one woman in the world who dares tell the truth

HELENA My husband doesn't understand me

PARIS (*with conviction*) I knew you detested him

HELENA He never listens to my aspersions.

PARIS Egoist

HELENA (*assuming an irresistible pose*) I'm tired of being only lovely He doesn't realize the meaning of spiritual intercourse of soul communion

PARIS Fool!

HELENA You dare call Moo Moo a fool?

PARIS Has he not been too blind to see that your soul outshines your beauty? (*Then very dramatically*) You're stifling!

HELENA (*clearing her throat*) I—I—

PARIS He has made you sit upon your wings (*HELENA jumping up shifts her position*) You are groping in the darkness

HELENA Don't be silly It's very light in here

PARIS (*undisturbed*) You are stumbling and I have come to lead you (*He steps toward her*)

HELENA Stop right there! (*PARIS stops*) No man but the King can come within ten feet of me It's a court tradition

PARIS Necessity knows no tradition (*He falls on his knees before her*) I shall come close to you though the flame of your beauty consume me

HELENA You'd better be careful what you say to me Remember I'm the Queen

PARIS No man weighs his words who has but a moment to live

HELENA You said that exactly like an actor (*He leans very close to her*) What are you doing now?

PARIS I am looking into you You are the clear glass in which I read the secret of the universe

HELENA The secret of the universe Ah! Perhaps you could understand me

PARIS First you must understand yourself

HELENA (*instinctively taking up a mirror*) How?

PARIS You must break with all this prose (*With an unconscious gesture he sweeps a tray of toilet articles from the table* HELENA emits a little shriek)

HELENA The ointment!

PARIS (*rushing to the window and pointing to the distance*) And climb to infinite poesy!

HELENA (*catching his enthusiasm says very blandly*) There is nothing in the world like poetry

PARIS (*lyrically*) Have you ever heard the poignant breathing of the stars?

HELENA No I don't believe in astrology

PARIS Have you ever smelt the powdery mists of the sun?

HELENA I should sneeze myself to death

PARIS Have you ever listened to the sapphire soul of the sea?

HELENA Has the sea a soul? But please don't stop talking You do it so beautifully

PARIS Deeds are sweeter than words Shall we go hand in hand to meet eternity?

HELENA (*not comprehending him*) That's very pretty Say it again

PARIS (*passionately*) There's but a moment of life left me I shall stifle it in ecstasy Helena Helena I adore you!

HELENA (*jumping up in high surprise*) You're not making love to me you naughty boy?

PARIS Helena

HELENA You've spoken to me so little and already you dare to do that

PARIS (*impetuously*) I am a lover of life I skip the essentials

HELENA Remember who I am

PARIS I have not forgotten Daughter of Heaven (*Suddenly he leaps to his feet*) Listen!

HELENA Shhhh! That's the King and Analytikos in the library

PARIS No! No! Don't you hear the flutter of wings?

HELENA Wings?

PARIS (*ecstatically*) Venus mother of Love!

HELENA (*alarmed*) What is it?

PARIS She has sent her messenger I hear the patter of little feet

HELENA Those little feet are the soldiers below in the courtyard
(*A trumpet sounds*)

PARIS (*the truth of the situation breaking through his emotion*) In a moment I shall be killed

HELENA Killed?

PARIS Save me and save yourself!

HELENA Myself?

PARIS I shall rescue you and lead you on to life

HELENA No one has ever spoken to me like that before

PARIS This is the first time your ears have heard the truth

HELENA Was it of you I've been dreaming?

PARIS Your dream was but your unrealized desire

HELENA Menelaus has never made me feel like this (*And then with a sudden shriek*) Oh! I'm a wicked woman!

PARIS No! No!

HELENA For years I've been living with a man I didn't love

PARIS Yes! Yes!

HELENA I'm lost!

PARIS (*at a loss*) No! Yes! Yes! No!

HELENA It was a profanation of the most holy

PARIS The holiest awaits you Helena! Our love will lighten the Plutonian realms

HELENA Menelaus never spoke to me like that

PARIS This but the first whisper of my adoration

HELENA I can't face him every morning at breakfast for the rest of my life That's even more than a Queen can bear

PARIS I am waiting to release you

HELENA I've stood it for seven years

PARIS I've been coming to you since the beginning of time

HELENA There is something urging me to go with you something I do not understand

PARIS Quick! There is but a moment left us (*He takes her rapturously in his arms There is a passionate embrace in the midst of which TSUMU enters*)

TSUMU The chiropodist has come

HELENA Bring me my outer garment and my purse
(*TSUMU exits, her eyes wide on PARIS*)

PARIS Helena! Helena!
(*HELENA looks about her and takes up the papyrus that MENELAUS has flung to the floor*)

HELENA A last word to the King (*She looks at the papyrus*) No, this won't do, I shall have to take this with me

PARIS What is it?

HELENA Maskanda's discourse on the hip
(*A trumpet sounds below in the courtyard*)

PARIS (*excitedly*) Leave it—or your hip may cost me my head We haven't a minute to spare Hurry! Hurry!

(*HELENA takes up an eyebrow pencil and writes on the back of the papyrus She looks for a place to put it and seeing the shield she smears it with some of the ointment and sticks the papyrus to it*)

PARIS (*watching her in ecstasy*) You are the fairest of all fair women and your name will blaze as a symbol throughout eternity
(*TSUMU enters with the purse and the Queen's outer robe*)

HELENA (*tossing the purse to PARIS*) Here we may need this

PARIS (*throwing it back to TSUMU*) This for your silence daughter of darkness A prince has no need of purses

TSUMU (*looking at him*) A prince!

HELENA (*gloriously*) My prince of poetry My deliverer!

PARIS (*divinely*) My queen of love! (*They go out TSUMU looking after them in speechless amazement Suddenly she sees the papyrus on the shield runs over and reads it and then rushes to the door of the library*)

TSUMU (*calling*) Analytikos (*She hides the purse in her bosom ANALYTİKOS enters, scroll in hand*)

ANALYTİKOS Has the Queen summoned me?

TSUMU (*mysteriously*) A terrible thing has happened

ANALYTİKOS What's the matter?

TSUMU Where's the King?

ANALYTİKOS In the library

TSUMU I have news more precious than the gold of Midas

ANALYTİKOS (*giving her a purse*) Well! What is it?

TSUMU (*speaking very dramatically and watching the effect of her words*) The Queen has deserted Menelaus

ANALYTİKOS (*receiving the shock philosophically*) Swift are the ways of Nature The Gods have smiled upon him

TSUMU The Gods have forsaken the King to smile upon a prince

ANALYTİKOS What?

TSUMU He was a prince

ANALYTİKOS (*apprehensively*) Why do you say that?

TSUMU (*clutching her bosom*) I have a good reason to know (*There is a sound of voices below in the courtyard MENELAUS rushes in expectantly TSUMU falls prostrate before him*) Oh King in thy bottomless agony blame not a blameless Negress The Queen has fled!

MENELAUS (*in his delight forgetting himself and flinging her a purse*) Is it true?

TSUMU Woe! Woe is me!

MENELAUS (*storming*) Out of my sight you eyeless Argus!

ANALYTIKOS (to TSUMU) Quick send a messenger Find out who he was

(TSUMU *sticks the third purse in her bosom and runs out*)

MENELAUS (*with radiant happiness kneeling before the bust of Zeus*) Ye Gods I thank ye Peace and a happy life at last
(*The shouts in the courtyard grow louder*)

ANALYTIKOS The news has spread through the palace

MENELAUS (*in trepidation springing up*) No one would dare stop the progress of the Queen

TSUMU (*rushes in and prostrates herself before the King*) Woe is me! They have gone by the road to the harbor

MENELAUS (*anxiously*) Yes! Yes!

TSUMU By the King's orders no man has dared gaze upon Her Majesty They all fell prostrate before her

MENELAUS Good! Good! (*Attempting to cover his delight*) Go! Go! You garrulous dog

(TSUMU *gets up and points to shield*

ANALYTIKOS *and the King look to ward it ANALYTIKOS tears off the papyrus and brings it to MENELAUS TSUMU watching them exits*)

MENELAUS (*reading*) I am not a bad woman I did what I had to do How Greek to blame fate for what one wants to do

(TSUMU *again comes tumbling in*)

TSUMU (*again prostrate before the King*) A rumor flies through the city He—he—

ANALYTIKOS (*anxiously*) Well? Well?

TSUMU He—he—

MENELAUS (*furiously to ANALYTIKOS*) Rid me of this croaking raven

TSUMU Evil has fallen on Sparta He—

ANALYTIKOS Yes—yes—

MENELAUS (*in a rage*) Out of my sight perfidious Nubian
(*Sounds of confusion in the courtyard Suddenly she springs to her feet and yells at the top of her voice*)

TSUMU He was Paris Prince of Troy!
(*They all start back ANALYTIKOS stumbles into a seat MENELAUS turns pale TSUMU leers like a black Nemesis*)

ANALYTIKOS (*very ominously*) Who can read the secret of the Fates?

MENELAUS (*frightened*) What do you mean?

ANALYTIKOS He is the son of Priam King of Troy

TSUMU (*adding fuel*) And of Hecuba Queen of the Trojans (*She rushes out to spread the news*)

ANALYTIKOS That makes the matter international

MENELAUS (*quickly*) But we have treaties with Troy

ANALYTIKOS Circumstances alter
treaties They will mean nothing

MENEIAUS Nothing?

ANALYTIKOS No more than a scrap
of papyrus Sparta will fight to re-
gain her Queen

MENEIAUS But I don't want her
back

ANALYTIKOS Can you tell that to
Sparta? Remember the King can do
no wrong Last night I dreamed of
war

MENEIAUS No! No! Don't say that
After the scandal I can't be expected
to fight to get her back

ANALYTIKOS Sparta will see with
the eyes of chivalry

MENEIAUS (*fuming*) But I don't
believe in war

ANALYTIKOS (*still obdurate*) Have
you forgotten the oath pledged of
old with Ulysses and Agamemnon?
They have sworn if ever the time
came to fight and defend the
Queen

MENEIAUS (*bitterly*) I didn't think
of the triple alliance

ANALYTIKOS Can Sparta ask less of
her King?

MENEIAUS Let's hear the other side
We can perhaps arbitrate Peace at
any price

ANALYTIKOS Some bargains are too
cheap

MENEIAUS (*hopelessly*) But I am a
pacifist

ANALYTIKOS You are Menelaus of
Sparta and Sparta's a nation of sol-
diers

MENEIAUS (*desperately*) I am too
proud to fight!

ANALYTIKOS Here put on your
shield (*A great clamor comes up
from the courtyard ANALYTIKOS
steps out on the balcony and is
greeted with shouts of The King!
The King! Addressing the crowd*)
People of Sparta this calamity has
been forced upon us (*MENEIAUS
winces*) We are a peaceful people
But thanks to our unparalleled effi-
ciency the military system of Sparta
is the most powerful in all Greece
and we can mobilize in half an hour
(*Loud acclaims from the people*
MENEIAUS *the papyrus still in hand*
crawls over and attempts to stop
ANALYTIKOS)

ANALYTIKOS (*not noticing him*) In
the midst of connubial and commu-
nal peace the thunderbolt has fallen
on the King (*MENEIAUS tugs at
ANALYTIKOS robe*) Broken in spirit
as he is he is already pawing the
ground like a battle steed Never
will we lay down our arms! We and
Jupiter! (*Cheers*) Never until the
Queen is restored to Menelaus
Never even if it takes ten years
(*MENEIAUS squirms A loud cheer*)
Even now the King is buckling on
his shield (*More cheers ANALYTI-
KOS steps farther forward and then
with bursting eloquence*) One hate
we have and one alone! (*Yells from
below*)

*Hate by water and hate by land
Hate of the head and hate of the
hand*

*Hate of Paris and hate of Troy
That has broken the Queen for a
moment's toy*

(The yells grow fiercer)
Zeus thunder will shatter the Tro
jan throne

We have one hate and one alone!
(MENELAUS sits on the floor deject
edly looking at the papyrus A
thunder of voices from the people)

We have one hate and one alone
Troy! Troy!

(Helmets and swords are thrown
into the air The cheers grow tumultuous
trumpets are blown and the
Curtain falls)

Suppressed Desires

A COMEDY IN TWO EPISODES

BY SUSAN GLASPELL

IN COLLABORATION WITH
GEORGE CRAM COOK

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CHARACTERS

HENRIETTA BREWSTER

STEPHEN BREWSTER

MABEL

SCENE—*A Studio Apartment*

SUPPRESSED DESIRES

SCENE I—A studio apartment in an upper story Washington Square South. Through an immense north window in the back wall appear tree tops and the upper part of the Washington Arch. Beyond it you look up Fifth Avenue. Near the window is a big table loaded at one end with serious looking books and austere scientific periodicals. At the other end are architect's drawings, blue prints, dividing compasses, square ruler, etc. At the left is a door leading to the rest of the apartment; at the right the outer door. A breakfast table is set for three, but only two are seated at it—HENRIETTA and STEPHEN BREWSTER. As the curtains withdraw STEVE pushes back his coffee cup and sits dejected.

HENRIETTA It isn't the coffee, Steve dear. There's nothing the matter with the coffee. There's something the matter with *you*.

STEVE (*doggedly*) There may be something the matter with my stomach.

HENRIETTA (*scornfully*) Your stomach! The trouble is not with your stomach but in your subconscious mind.

STEVE Subconscious piffle! (*Takes morning paper and tries to read*)

HENRIETTA Steve, you never used to be so disagreeable. You certainly have got some sort of a complex. You're all inhibited. You're no longer open to new ideas. You won't listen to a word about psychoanalysis.

STEVE A word! I've listened to volumes!

HENRIETTA You've ceased to be creative in architecture—your work isn't going well. You're not sleeping well—

STEVE How can I sleep, Henrietta, when you're always waking me up to find out what I'm dreaming?

HENRIETTA But dreams are so important, Steve. If you'd tell yours to Dr. Russell, he'd find out exactly what's wrong with you.

STEVE There's nothing wrong with me.

HENRIETTA You don't even talk as well as you used to.

STEVE Talk? I can't say a thing without you looking at me in that dark fashion you have when you're on the trail of a complex.

HENRIETTA This very irritability indicates that you're suffering from some suppressed desire.

STEVE I'm suffering from a suppressed desire for a little peace.

HENRIETTA Dr. Russell is doing simply wonderful things with nervous cases. Won't you go to him, Steve?

STEVE (*slamming down his newspaper*) No, Henrietta. I won't!

HENRIETTA But Stephen—!

STEVE Tst! I hear Mabel coming
Let's not be at each other's throats
the first day of her visit (*He takes
out cigarettes MABEL comes in from
door left the side opposite STEVE
so that he is facing her She is wear-
ing a rather fussy negligee in con-
trast to HENRIETTA who wears
radical clothes MABEL is what is
called plump*)

MABEL Good morning

HENRIETTA Oh here you are little
sister

STEVE Good morning Mabel
(*MABEL nods to him and turns her
face lighting up to HENRIETTA*)

HENRIETTA (*giving MABEL a hug as
she leans against her*) It's so good
to have you here I was going to let
you sleep thinking you'd be tired
after the long trip Sit down
There'll be fresh toast in a minute
and (*rising*) will you have—

MABEL Oh I ought to have told
you Henrietta Don't get anything
for me I'm not eating breakfast

HENRIETTA (*at first in mere sur-
prise*) Not eating breakfast? (*She
sits down then leans toward MABEL
who is seated now, and scrutinizes
her*)

STEVE (*half to himself*) The psy-
choanalytical look!

HENRIETTA Mabel why are you not
eating breakfast?

MABEL (*a little startled*) Why no
particular reason I just don't care
much for breakfast, and they say it

keeps down— (*A hand on her hip
—the gesture of one who is reduc-
ing*) that is it's a good thing to go
without it

HENRIETTA Don't you sleep well?
Did you sleep well last night?

MABEL Oh yes I slept all right
Yes I slept fine last night only
(*laughing*) I did have the funniest
dream!

STEVE S h! S t!

HENRIETTA (*moving closer*) And
what did you dream Mabel?

STEVE Look a here Mabel I feel
it's my duty to put you on Don't tell
Henrietta your dreams If you do
she'll find out that you have an un-
derground desire to kill your father
and marry your mother—

HENRIETTA Don't be absurd
Stephen Brewster (*Sweetly to
MABEL*) What was your dream
dear?

MABEL (*laughing*) Well I
dreamed I was a hen

HENRIETTA A hen?

MABEL Yes and I was pushing
along through a crowd as fast as I
could but being a hen I couldn't
walk very fast—it was like having a
tight skirt you know and there was
some sort of creature in a blue cap
—you know how mixed up dreams
are—and it kept shouting after me
Step Hen! Step Hen! until I got
all excited and just couldn't move at
all

HENRIETTA (*resting chin in palm
and peering*) You say you became
much excited?

MABEL (*laughing*) Oh yes I was in a terrible state

HENRIETTA (*leaning back murmurs*) This is significant

STEVE She dreams she's a hen She is told to step lively She becomes violently agitated What can it mean?

HENRIETTA (*turning impatiently from him*) Mabel do you know anything about psychoanalysis?

MABEL (*feebly*) Oh—not much No—I— (*Brightening*) It's something about the war isn't it?

STEVE Not that kind of war

MABEL (*abashed*) I thought it might be the name of a new explosive

STEVE It is

MABEL (*apologetically to HENRIETTA who is frowning*) You see Henrietta I—we do not live in touch with intellectual things as you do Bob being a dentist—some how our friends—

STEVE (*softly*) Oh to be a dentist! (*Goes to window and stands looking out*)

HENRIETTA Don't you see anything more of that editorial writer—what was his name?

MABEL Lyman Eggleston?

HENRIETTA Yes Eggleston He was in touch with things Don't you see him?

MABEL Yes I see him once in a while Bob doesn't like him very well

HENRIETTA Your husband does not like Lyman Eggleston? (*Mysteriously*) Mabel are you perfectly happy with your husband?

STEVE (*sharply*) Oh come now Henrietta—that's going a little strong!

HENRIETTA Are you perfectly happy with him Mabel?
(*STEVE goes to work table*)

MABEL Why—yes—I guess so Why—of course I am!

HENRIETTA Are you happy? Or do you only think you are? Or do you only think you *ought* to be?

MABEL Why Henrietta I don't know what you mean!

STEVE (*seizes stack of books and magazines and dumps them on the breakfast table*) This is what she means Mabel Psychoanalysis My work table groans with it Books by Freud the new Messiah books by Jung the new St Paul the Psychoanalytical Review—back numbers two fifty per

MABEL But what's it all about?

STEVE All about your sub unconconscious mind and desires you know not of They may be doing you a great deal of harm You may go crazy with them Oh yes! People are doing it right and left You're dreaming you're a hen— (*Shakes his head darkly*)

HENRIETTA Any fool can ridicule anything

MABEL (*hastily to avert a quarrel*) But what do you say it is Henrietta?

STEVE (*looking at his watch*) Oh if Henrietta's going to start that! (*During HENRIETTA'S next speech settles himself at work table and sharpens a lead pencil*)

HENRIETTA It's like this Mabel You want something You think you can't have it You think it's wrong So you try to think you don't want it Your mind protects you—avoids pain—by refusing to think the forbidden thing But it's there just the same It stays there shut up in your unconscious mind and it festers

STEVE Sort of an ingrowing mental toenail

HENRIETTA Precisely The forbidden impulse is there full of energy which has simply got to do something It breaks into your consciousness in disguise masks itself in dreams makes all sorts of trouble In extreme cases it drives you insane

MABEL (*with a gesture of horror*) Oh!

HENRIETTA (*reassuring*) But psychoanalysis has found out how to save us from that It brings into consciousness the suppressed desire that was making all the trouble Psychoanalysis is simply the latest scientific method of preventing and curing insanity

STEVE (*from his table*) It is also the latest scientific method of separating families

HENRIETTA (*mildly*) Families that ought to be separated

STEVE The Dwights for instance You must have met them Mabel when you were here before Helen was living apparently in peace and happiness with good old Joe Well—she went to this psychoanalyzer—she was psyched and biff!—bang!—home she comes with an unsuppressed desire to leave her husband (*He starts work drawing lines on a drawing board with a T square*)

MABEL How terrible! Yes I remember Helen Dwight But—but did she have such a desire?

STEVE First she'd known of it

MABEL And she left him?

HENRIETTA (*coolly*) Yes she did

MABEL Wasn't he good to her?

HENRIETTA Why yes good enough

MABEL Wasn't he kind to her?

HENRIETTA Oh yes—kind to her

MABEL And she left her good kind husband—!

HENRIETTA Oh, Mabel! Left her good kind husband! How naive—forgive me dear but how bourgeois you are! She came to know herself And she had the courage!

MABEL I may be very naive and—bourgeois—but I don't see the good of a new science that breaks up homes
(*STEVE applauds*)

STEVE In enlightening Mabel we mustn't neglect to mention the case of Art Holden's private secretary Mary Snow who has just been informed of her suppressed desire for her employer

MABEL Why I think it is terrible Henrietta! It would be better if we didn't know such things about ourselves

HENRIETTA No Mabel that is the old way

MABEL But—but her employer? Is he married?

STEVE (*grunts*) Wife and four children

MABEL Well then what good does it do the girl to be told she has a desire for him? There's nothing can be done about it

HENRIETTA Old institutions will have to be reshaped so that something can be done in such cases It happens Mabel that this suppressed desire was on the point of landing Mary Snow in the insane asylum Are you so tight minded that you'd rather have her in the insane asylum than break the conventions?

MABEL But—but have people always had these awful suppressed desires?

HENRIETTA Always

STEVE But they've just been discovered

HENRIETTA The harm they do has just been discovered And free sane people must face the fact that they have to be dealt with

MABEL (*stoutly*) I don't believe they have them in Chicago

HENRIETTA (*business of giving Mabel up*) People 'have them' wherever the living Libido—the center of the soul's energy—is in conflict with petrified moral codes That means everywhere in civilization Psychoanalysis—

STEVE Good God! I've got the roof in the cellar!

HENRIETTA The roof in the cellar!

STEVE (*holding plan at arms length*) That's what psychoanalysis does!

HENRIETTA That's what psychoanalysis could *un-do* Is it any wonder I'm concerned about Steve? He dreamed the other night that the walls of his room melted away and he found himself alone in a forest Don't you see how significant it is for an architect to have *walls* slip away from him? It symbolizes his loss of grip in his work There's some suppressed desire—

STEVE (*hurling his rumed plan viciously to the floor*) Suppressed hell!

HENRIETTA You speak more truly than you know It is through suppressions that hells are formed in us

MABEL (*looking at STEVE who is tearing his hair*) Don't you think it would be a good thing Henrietta if we went somewhere else? (*They rise and begin to pick up the dishes MABEL drops a plate which breaks HENRIETTA draws up short and looks at her—the psychoanalytic look*) I'm sorry Henrietta One of

the Spode plates too (*Surprised and resentful as HENRIETTA continues to peer at her*) Don't take it so to heart Henrietta

HENRIETTA I can't help taking it to heart

MABEL I'll get you another (*Pause More sharply as HENRIETTA does not answer*) I said I'll get you another plate Henrietta

HENRIETTA It's not the plate

MABEL For heaven's sake what is it then?

HENRIETTA It's the significant little false movement that made you drop it

MABEL Well I suppose everyone makes a false movement once in a while

HENRIETTA Yes Mabel but these false movements all mean something

MABEL (*about to cry*) I don't think that's very nice! It was just because I happened to think of that Mabel Snow you were talking about—

HENRIETTA Mabel Snow!

MABEL Snow—Snow—well what was her name then?

HENRIETTA Her name is Mary You substituted *your own* name for hers

MABEL Well *Mary* Snow then *Mary* Snow I never heard her name but once I don't see anything to make such a fuss about

HENRIETTA (*gently*) Mabel dear—mistakes like that in names—

MABEL (*desperately*) They don't mean something too do they?

HENRIETTA (*gently*) I am sorry dear but they do

MABEL But I'm always doing that!

HENRIETTA (*after a start of horror*) My poor little sister tell me about it

MABEL About what?

HENRIETTA About your not being happy About your longing for another sort of life

MABEL But I *don't*

HENRIETTA Ah I understand these things dear You feel Bob is limiting you to a life in which you do not feel free—

MABEL Henrietta! When did I ever say such a thing?

HENRIETTA You said you are not in touch with things intellectual You showed your feeling that it is Bob's profession—that has engendered a resentment which has colored your whole life with him

MABEL Why—Henrietta!

HENRIETTA Don't be afraid of me little sister There's nothing can shock me or turn me from you I am not like that I wanted you to come for this visit because I had a feeling that you needed more from life than you were getting No one of these things I have seen would excite my suspicion It's the combination You don't eat breakfast (*enumerating on her fingers*) you make false moves you substitute your own name for the name of another *whose*

love is misdirected You're nervous you look queer in your eyes there's a frightened look that is most unlike you And this dream A hen Come with me this afternoon to Dr Russell! Your whole life may be at stake Mabel

MABEL (*gasping*) Henrietta I—you— you—you always were the smartest in the family and all that but—this is terrible! I don't think we ought to think such things (*Brightening*) Why I'll tell you why I dreamed I was a hen It was because last night telling about that time in Chicago you said I was as mad as a wet hen

HENRIETTA (*superior*) Did you dream you were a wet hen?

MABEL (*forced to admit it*) No

HENRIETTA No You dreamed you were a dry hen And why being a hen were you urged to step?

MABEL Maybe it's because when I am getting on a street car it always irritates me to have them call Step lively

HENRIETTA No Mabel that is only a child's view of it—if you will for give me You see merely the elements used in the dream You do not see into the dream you do not see its meaning This dream of the hen—

STEVE Hen—hen—wet hen—dry hen—mad hen! (*Jumps up in a rage*) Let me out of this!

HENRIETTA (*hastily picking up dishes speaks soothingly*) Just a minute dear and we'll have things so you can work in quiet Mabel and I are going to sit in my room (*She goes out left carrying dishes*)

STEVE (*seizing hat and coat from an alcove near the outside door*) I'm going to be psychoanalyzed I'm going now! I'm going straight to that infallible doctor of hers—that priest of this new religion If he's got honesty enough to tell Henrietta there's nothing the matter with my unconscious mind perhaps I can be left alone about it and then I will be all right (*From the door in a low voice*) Don't tell Henrietta I'm going It might take weeks and I couldn't stand all the talk (*He hurries out*)

HENRIETTA (*returning*) Where's Steve? Gone? (*With a hopeless gesture*) You see how impatient he is—how unlike himself! I tell you, Mabel I'm nearly distracted about Steve

MABEL I think he's a little distracted too

HENRIETTA Well if he's gone—you might as well stay here I have a committee meeting at the book shop and will have to leave you to yourself for an hour or two (*As she puts her hat on taking it from the alcove where STEVE found his her eye lighting up almost carnivorously falls on an enormous volume on the floor beside the work table The book has been half hidden by the wastebasket She picks it up and carries it around the table toward MABEL*) Here dear is one of the simplest statements of psychoanalysis You just read this and then we can talk more intelligently (*MABEL takes volume and staggers back under its weight to chair rear center HENRIETTA goes to outer door stops and asks abruptly*) How old is Lyman Eggleston?

MABEL (*promptly*) He isn't forty yet Why what made you ask that Henrietta? (*As she turns her head to look at HENRIETTA her hands move toward the upper corners of the book balanced on her knees*)

HENRIETTA Oh nothing Au revoir

(*She goes out MABEL stares at the ceiling The book slides to the floor She starts looks at the book then at the broken plate on the table*) The plate! The book! (*She lifts her eyes leans forward elbow on knee chin on knuckles and plaintively queries*) Am I unhappy?

CURTAIN

SCENE II—Two weeks later The stage is as in Scene I except that the breakfast table has been removed During the first few minutes the dusk of a winter afternoon deepens Out of the darkness spring rows of double street lights almost meeting in the distance HENRIETTA is at the psychoanalytical end of STEVE'S work table surrounded by open books and periodicals writing STEVE enters briskly

STEVE What are you doing my dear?

HENRIETTA My paper for the Liberal Club

STEVE Your paper on—?

HENRIETTA On a subject which does not have your sympathy

STEVE Oh I'm not sure I'm wholly out of sympathy with psychoanalysis Henrietta You worked it so hard I couldn't even take a bath without its meaning something

HENRIETTA (*loftily*) I talked it because I knew you needed it

STEVE You haven't said much about it these last two weeks Uh—your faith in it hasn't weakened any?

HENRIETTA Weakened? It's grown stronger with each new thing I've come to know And Mabel She is with Dr Russell now Dr Russell is

wonderful! From what Mabel tells me I believe his analysis is going to prove that I was right Today I discovered a remarkable confirmation of my theory in the hen dream

STEVE What is your theory?

HENRIETTA Well you know about Lyman Eggleston I've wondered about him I've never seen him but I know he's less bourgeois than Mabel's other friends—more intellectual—and (*significantly*) she doesn't see much of him because Bob doesn't like him

STEVE But what's the confirmation?

HENRIETTA Today I noticed the first syllable of his name

STEVE Ly?

HENRIETTA No—egg

STEVE Egg?

HENRIETTA (*patiently*) Mabel dreamed she was a *hen* (STEVE *laughs*) You wouldn't laugh if you knew how important names are in interpreting dreams Freud is full of just such cases in which a whole hidden complex is revealed by a single significant syllable—like this egg

STEVE Doesn't the traditional relation of hen and egg suggest rather a maternal feeling?

HENRIETTA There is something maternal in Mabel's love of course but that's only one element

STEVE Well suppose Mabel hasn't a suppressed desire to be this gentleman's mother but his beloved What's to be done about it? What about Bob? Don't you think it's going to be a little rough on him?

HENRIETTA That can't be helped Bob like everyone else must face the facts of life If Dr Russell should arrive independently at this same interpretation I shall not hesitate to advise Mabel to leave her present husband

STEVE Um—hum! (*The lights go up on Fifth Avenue STEVE goes to the window and looks out*) How long is it we've lived here Henrietta?

HENRIETTA Why this is the third year Steve

STEVE I—we—one would miss this view if one went away wouldn't one?

HENRIETTA How strangely you speak! Oh Stephen I wish you'd go to Dr Russell Don't think my

fears have abated because I've been able to restrain myself I had to on account of Mabel But now dear—won't you go?

STEVE I— (*He breaks off turns on the light then comes and sits beside HENRIETTA*) How long have we been married Henrietta?

HENRIETTA Stephen I don't understand you! You *must* go to Dr Russell

STEVE I have gone

HENRIETTA You—what?

STEVE (*jauntily*) Yes Henrietta, I've been psyched

HENRIETTA You went to Dr Russell?

STEVE The same

HENRIETTA And what did he say?

STEVE He said—I—I was a little surprised by what he said Henrietta

HENRIETTA (*breathlessly*) Of course—one can so seldom anticipate But tell me—your dream Stephen? It means—?

STEVE It means—I was considerably surprised by what it means

HENRIETTA Don't be so exasperating!

STEVE It means—you really want to know Henrietta?

HENRIETTA Stephen you'll drive me mad!

STEVE He said—of course he may be wrong in what he said

HENRIETTA And he told you to leave me?

HENRIETTA He *isn't* wrong Tell me!

STEVE It seems he must be wrong Henrietta

STEVE He said my dream of the walls receding and leaving me alone in a forest indicates a suppressed desire—

HENRIETTA (*rising*) And I've sent him more patients—! (*Catches herself and resumes coldly*) What reason did he give for this analysis?

HENRIETTA Yes—yes!

STEVE He says the confining walls are a symbol of my feeling about marriage and that their fading away is a wish fulfillment

STEVE To be freed from—

HENRIETTA Yes—freed from—?

STEVE Marriage

HENRIETTA (*gulping*) Well is it? Do you want our marriage to end?

HENRIETTA (*crumples Stares*) Marriage!

STEVE It was a great surprise to me that I did You see I hadn't known what was in my unconscious mind

STEVE He—he may be mistaken you know

HENRIETTA (*flaming*) What did you tell Dr Russell about me to make him think you weren't happy?

HENRIETTA May be mistaken?

STEVE I—well of course I hadn't taken any stock in it myself It was only your great confidence—

STEVE I never told him a thing Henrietta He got it all from his confounded clever inferences I—I tried to refute them but he said that was only part of my self protective lying

HENRIETTA Stephen are you telling me that Dr Russell—Dr A E Russell—told you this? (*STEVE nods*) Told you you have a suppressed desire to separate from me?

HENRIETTA And that's why you were so—happy—when you came in just now!

STEVE That's what he said

STEVE Why Henrietta how can you say such a thing? I was *sad* Didn't I speak sadly of—of the view? Didn't I ask how long we had been married?

HENRIETTA Did he know who you were?

STEVE Yes

HENRIETTA (*rising*) Stephen Brewster have you no sense of the seriousness of this? Dr Russell doesn't know what our marriage has been You do You should have laughed

HENRIETTA That you were married to me?

STEVE Yes he knew that

him down! Confined—in life with me? Did you tell him that I *believe* in freedom?

STEVE I very emphatically told him that his results were a great surprise to me

HENRIETTA But you accepted them

STEVE Oh not at all I merely couldn't refute his arguments I'm not a psychologist I came home to talk it over with you You being a disciple of psychoanalysis—

HENRIETTA If you are going I wish you would go tonight!

STEVE Oh my dear! I—surely I couldn't do that! Think of my feelings And my laundry hasn't come home

HENRIETTA I ask you to go tonight Some women would falter at this Steve but I am not such a woman I leave you free I do not repudiate psychoanalysis I say again that it has done great things It has also made mistakes of course But since you accept this analysis— (*She sits down and pretends to begin work*) I have to finish this paper I wish you would leave me

STEVE (*scratches his head goes to the inner door*) I'm sorry Henrietta about my unconscious mind (*Alone HENRIETTA'S face betrays her outraged state of mind—disconcerted resentful trying to pull her self together She attains an air of bravely bearing an outrageous thing—The outer door opens and MABEL enters in great excitement*)

MABEL (*breathless*) Henrietta, I'm so glad you're here And alone?

(*Looks toward the inner door*) Are you alone Henrietta?

HENRIETTA (*with reproving dignity*) Very much so

MABEL (*rushing to her*) Henrietta he's found it!

HENRIETTA (*aloof*) Who has found what?

MABEL Who has found what? Dr Russell has found my suppressed desire!

HENRIETTA That is interesting

MABEL He finished with me today—he got hold of my complex—in the most amazing way! But, oh, Henrietta—it is so terrible!

HENRIETTA Do calm yourself Mabel Surely there's no occasion for all this agitation

MABEL But there is! And when you think of the lives that are affected—the readjustments that must be made in order to bring the suppressed hell out of me and save me from the insane asylum—!

HENRIETTA The insane asylum!

MABEL You said that's where these complexes brought people!

HENRIETTA What did the doctor tell you Mabel?

MABEL Oh I don't know how I can tell you—it is so awful—so unbelievable

HENRIETTA I rather have my hand in at hearing the unbelievable

MABEL Henrietta who would ever have thought it? How can it be true? But the doctor is perfectly certain that I have a suppressed desire for — (*Looks at HENRIETTA is unable to continue*)

HENRIETTA Oh go on Mabel I'm not unprepared for what you have to say

MABEL Not unprepared? You mean you have suspected it?

HENRIETTA From the first It's been my theory all along

MABEL But Henrietta I didn't know myself that I had this secret desire for Stephen

HENRIETTA (*jumps up*) Stephen!

MABEL My brother in law! My own sister's husband!

HENRIETTA You have a suppressed desire for *Stephen!*

MABEL Oh Henrietta aren't these unconscious selves terrible? They seem so unlike *us!*

HENRIETTA What insane thing are you driving at?

MABEL (*blubbing*) Henrietta don't you use that word to me I don't *want* to go to the insane asylum

HENRIETTA What did Dr Russell say?

MABEL Well you see—oh it's the strangest thing! But you know the voice in my dream that called Step, Hen! Dr Russell found out today that when I was a little girl I

had a story book in words of one syllable and I read the name Stephen wrong I used to read it Step step hen hen (*Dramatically*) Step Hen is Stephen (*Enter STEPHEN his head bent over a time table*) Stephen is Step Hen!

STEVE I? Step Hen?

MABEL (*triumphantly*) Step, step Hen hen Stephen!

HENRIETTA (*exploding*) Well what if Stephen is Step Hen? (*Scornfully*) Step Hen! Step Hen! For that ridiculous coincidence—

MABEL Coincidence! But it's childish to look at the mere elements of a dream You have to look *into* it—you have to see what it *means!*

HENRIETTA On account of that trivial meaningless play on syllables—on that flimsy basis—you are ready — (*Wails*) Oh!

STEVE What on earth's the matter? What has happened? Suppose I *am* Step Hen? What about it? What does it mean?

MABEL (*crying*) It means—that I—have a suppressed desire for *you!*

STEVE For me! The deuce you have! (*Feebly*) What—er—makes you think so?

MABEL Dr Russell has worked it out scientifically

HENRIETTA Yes Through the amazing discovery that Step Hen equals Stephen!

MABEL (*tearfully*) Oh that isn't all—that isn't near all Henrietta

won't give me a chance to tell it
She'd rather I'd go to the insane
asylum than be unconventional

HENRIETTA Well all go there if you
can't control yourself We are still
waiting for some rational report

MABEL (*drying her eyes*) Oh
there's such a lot about names
(*With some pride*) I don't see how
I ever did it It all works in to
gether I dreamed I was a hen be-
cause that's the first syllable of Hen-
rietta's name and when I dreamed
I was a hen I was putting myself
in Henrietta's place

HENRIETTA With Stephen?

MABEL With Stephen

HENRIETTA (*outraged*) Oh! (*Turns
in rage upon STEPHEN who is fan-
ning himself with the time table*)
What are you doing with that time
table?

STEVE Why—I thought—you were
so keen to have me go tonight—I
thought I'd just take a run up to
Canada and join Billy—a little
shooting—but—

MABEL But there's more about the
names

HENRIETTA Mabel have you
thought of Bob—dear old Bob—
your good kind husband?

MABEL Oh Henrietta my good
kind husband!

HENRIETTA Think of him Mabel
out there alone in Chicago work-
ing his head off fixing people's
teeth—for you!

MABEL Yes but think of the living
Libido—in conflict with petrified
moral codes! And think of the per-
fectly wonderful way the names all
prove it Dr Russell said he's never
seen anything more convincing Just
look at Stephen's last name—Brew-
ster I dream I'm a hen and the
name Brewster—you have to say
its first letter by itself—and then
the hen that's me she says to him
Stephen Be Rooster!

(HENRIETTA and STEPHEN collapse
into the nearest chairs)

MABEL I think it's perfectly won-
derful! Why if it wasn't for psy-
choanalysis you'd never find out
how wonderful your own mind is!

STEVE (*begins to chuckle*) Be
Rooster! Stephen Be Rooster!

HENRIETTA You think it's funny do
you?

STEVE Well what's to be done
about it? Does Mabel have to go
away with me?

HENRIETTA Do you want Mabel to
go away with you?

STEVE Well but Mabel herself—
her complex her suppressed de-
sire—!

HENRIETTA (*going to her*) Mabel,
are you going to insist on going
away with Stephen?

MABEL I'd rather go with Stephen
than go to the insane asylum!

HENRIETTA For heaven's sake Ma-
bel drop that insane asylum! If you
did have a suppressed desire for
Stephen hidden away in you—God
knows it isn't hidden now Dr Rus-

sell has brought it into your consciousness—with a vengeance That's all that's necessary to break up a complex Psychoanalysis doesn't say you have to *gratify* every suppressed desire

STEVE (*softly*) Unless it's for Lyman Eggleston

HENRIETTA (*turning on him*) Well if it comes to that, Stephen Brewster I'd like to know why that interpretation of mine isn't as good as this one? Step Hen!

STEVE But Be Rooster! (*He pauses, chuckling to himself*) Step Hen B rooster And Henrietta Pshaw my dear Doc Russell's got you beat a mile! (*He turns away and chuckles*) Be rooster!

MABEL What has Lyman Eggleston got to do with it?

STEVE According to Henrietta you the hen have a suppressed desire for Eggleston the egg

MABEL Henrietta I think that's indecent of you! He is bald as an egg and little and fat—the idea of you thinking such a thing of me!

HENRIETTA Well Bob isn't little and bald and fat! Why don't you stick to your own husband? (*To STEPHEN*) What if Dr Russell's interpretation has got mine 'beat a mile'? (*Resentful look at him*) It would only mean that Mabel doesn't want Eggleston and does want you Does that mean she has to have you?

MABEL But you said Mabel Snow—

HENRIETTA *Mary* Snow! You're not as much like her as you think—substituting your name for hers! The cases are entirely different Oh I wouldn't have *believed* this of you Mabel (*Beginning to cry*) I brought you here for a pleasant visit—thought you needed brightening up—wanted to be *nice* to you—and now you—my husband—you insist— (*In fumbling her way to her chair she brushes to the floor some sheets from the psychoanalytical table*)

STEVE (*with solicitude*) Careful dear Your paper on psychoanalysis! (*Gathers up sheets and offers them to her*)

HENRIETTA I don't want my paper on psychoanalysis! I'm sick of psychoanalysis!

STEVE (*eagerly*) Do you mean that Henrietta?

HENRIETTA Why shouldn't I mean it? Look at all I've done, for psychoanalysis—and— (*Raising a tear stained face*) what has psychoanalysis done for me?

STEVE Do you mean Henrietta that you're going to stop *talking* psychoanalysis?

HENRIETTA Why shouldn't I stop talking it? Haven't I seen what it does to people? Mabel has gone crazy about psychoanalysis! (*At the word crazy with a moan MABEL sinks to chair and buries her face in her hands*)

STEVE (*solemnly*) Do you swear never to wake me up in the night to find out what I'm dreaming?

HENRIETTA Dream what you please
—I don't care what you're dream-
ing

STEVE Will you clear off my work-
table so the Journal of Morbid Psy-
chology doesn't stare me in the face
when I'm trying to plan a house?

HENRIETTA (*pushing a stack of
periodicals off the table*) I'll burn
the Journal of Morbid Psychology!

STEVE My dear Henrietta if you're
going to separate from psychoanaly-

sis there's no reason why I should
separate from you

(*They embrace ardently MABEL
lifts her head and looks at them
woefully*)

MABEL (*jumping up and going
toward them*) But what about me?
What am I to do with my sup-
pressed desire?

STEVE (*with one arm still around*

HENRIETTA *gives MABEL a brotherly
hug*) Mabel you just keep right
on suppressing it!

CURTAIN

The Game of Chess

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY

KENNETH SAWYER GOODMAN

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CHARACTERS

ALEXIS ALEXANDROVITCH

BORIS IVANOVITCH SHAMRAYEFF

CONSTANTINE

FOOTMAN

THE GAME OF CHESS

The Scene is a wainscoted room in the house of ALEXIS High windows at the back left at the right back is a double door gving into an ante room against the right wall is a couch in the left wall near the back is a small door nearer the audience on the same wall a chimney breast with a carved mantel under the window at the back another couch and several chairs gve the room a luxurious air ALEXIS and CONSTANTINE are playing chess at a small table in front of an open fire There is a large table in the center of the stage with fruit a flagon of wine and glasses

ALEXIS You seem to have lost your cunning Constantine

CONSTANTINE Wait!

ALEXIS Perhaps the pawn?

CONSTANTINE No (*He moves*) Sol

ALEXIS Ah ha! That eh? Well well! The cunning is returning is it? (*He strikes a little bell beside him and again scans the board*)

CONSTANTINE Is the hour up Your Excellency?

ALEXIS No no! We still have ten minutes to play

CONSTANTINE Your Excellency tires of the game perhaps?

ALEXIS No, I never tire of the game When I do that I shall tire of life itself Chess is as much a gauge of a man's mental development as love or war or politics or any other game When I play bad chess I shall have ceased to be a competent governor We patricians do not justify our lives by the toil of our hands We should tune the machinery inside our skulls to its highest effectiveness We must keep it

tuned and timed and oiled Ah yes it is that way we serve When the machine balks or stops we are nothing

CONSTANTINE But Your Excellency was thinking of other things

ALEXIS Was I so? Well well! We shall see we shall see! I was thinking of other things eh? (*He makes a move swiftly*) There match me that if you can

CONSTANTINE Ah! The one move that could have saved your king!

ALEXIS There you have it! I doze I dream my mind wanders and then it comes in a flash The one move on the board! It is by such flashes I know myself

CONSTANTINE Your Excellency has inspiration

ALEXIS Perhaps! But behind inspiration always the technique of the game
(*A footman enters*)

FOOTMAN Your Excellency rang?

ALEXIS Is the man Shamrayeff waiting?

FOOTMAN A man Boris Ivanovitch Shamrayeff with a letter from Your Excellency is waiting in the secretary's room

ALEXIS You may bring him here in three minutes

FOOTMAN Pardon Excellency but the secretary wishes to know if the orders received from Mr Constantine are correct?

ALEXIS What orders?

FOOTMAN That the man Boris Ivanovitch Shamrayeff is not to be searched

ALEXIS There is no occasion to search the man

(FOOTMAN bows and withdraws)

ALEXIS (to CONSTANTINE) Your move my dear Constantine We have exactly two minutes to finish the game and one minute for questions (He lays his watch beside the chessboard)

CONSTANTINE (moves) So!

ALEXIS Ah! One moment! There! What now? (He moves)

CONSTANTINE This (He moves)

ALEXIS And this! (He moves)

CONSTANTINE Ah ha! I could checkmate Your Excellency in five more moves

ALEXIS The two minutes are up Tell me, you are quite certain that your agents made no mistake in the matter of this man Shamrayeff?

CONSTANTINE Quite certain Your Excellency I begged you to have

him put under arrest yesterday There is absolutely no question The man's entire history is in your hands

ALEXIS And in spite of all this I have granted him a personal interview I have given explicit orders that he is not to be searched In short I must be a fool eh?

CONSTANTINE I cannot question Your Excellency's judgment

ALEXIS Ah you can't question my judgment eh? But you think! I saw something behind your eyes just now when you said you would checkmate me in five moves You were thinking Alexis Alexandrovitch for all his fine talk is not what he used to be Something has slipped away from him Do you think I've become a coward?

CONSTANTINE Your Excellency!

ALEXIS I sometimes think so my self that some time there will be no flash that I shall be checkmated once and for all That's why I keep you here hour after hour playing chess with me that's why I am tempted to try another kind of game with this man Shamrayeff

CONSTANTINE Then you have a definite reason for seeing this man?

ALEXIS None that you would understand

CONSTANTINE But, in that case, might I point out to Your Excellency—Surely it would be safer—

ALEXIS Don't speak to me as if you were speaking to a child I know what you think Alexis Alexandrovitch is not what he was Things

are slipping past him he needs watching Well the time is up You have your orders

CONSTANTINE Shall I take away the chessmen?

ALEXIS No leave them as they are We'll finish the game when I ring for you (*CONSTANTINE rises and hesitates*) Well well well! You're going to say something You think the game won't be finished Well see Well see about that!

CONSTANTINE I beg Your Excellency—
(*FOOTMAN enters, followed by SHAMRAYEFF*)

FOOTMAN Boris Ivanovitch Shamrayeff
(*SHAMRAYEFF wears the clothes of a respectable artisan He is apparently somewhat younger than ALEXIS strongly built and has a rather fine but stolid face He stands with his cap in his hand*)

ALEXIS So so! You are Boris Ivanovitch Shamrayeff, are you? Well well!

BORIS Yes I am Boris Ivanovitch Shamrayeff!

ALEXIS You found it hard to get at me did you? Hard to get an interview with Alexis Alexandrovitch?

BORIS Not so hard as I had expected Your Excellency

ALEXIS (*to* CONSTANTINE *and* FOOTMAN) Well, what are you waiting for? This man has something important to say to me He's bashful He can't speak out before so many people

CONSTANTINE Your Excellency I will wait in the passage

ALEXIS Nonsense nonsense! Go into the garden and think about your game of chess! Go!
(*CONSTANTINE and FOOTMAN go out*)

ALEXIS (*to* BORIS) Sit down in that chair I want to look at you (*BORIS looks around uneasily*) Ah! There is no one watching us This room is in a corner of the house—nothing but windows behind you no balcony no hangings Open the door you came in by—there is no one in the passage Turn the key if you like (*BORIS steps quickly to the main doors throws them open, looks into the passage, shuts them again turns the key in the lock and slips it into his pocket*) You see we won't be disturbed Now sit down and tell me what you want (*BORIS sits down but says nothing*) Tongue tied eh? You don't know how to begin? Embarrassed eh?

BORIS No I was only wondering

ALEXIS Ha ha! Wondering eh?

BORIS I was wondering why Your Excellency chose to give me this opportunity?

ALEXIS This opportunity?

BORIS (*looking up*) This opportunity to kill Your Excellency

ALEXIS So so! To kill me? That's it is it? Well well! I thought as much but of course I couldn't be sure Well well! Go on go on!

BORIS (*simply*) God has delivered you into my hands

ALEXIS Pah! Leave God out of it! Don't give me any such cant non sense I doubt if God takes any interest in either of us I have delivered myself into your hands That's the simple fact of the matter I could have trapped you so easily too but I didn't even have you searched You may as well take the pistol out of your pocket

BORIS Your Excellency seems amused

ALEXIS No no not amused! I'm only curious to see you handle the thing—morbid curiosity if you like Take it out man take it out!

BORIS This is a solemn moment for us both Your Excellency

ALEXIS Solemn eh? Well well! Solemn! Oh I suppose it is solemn for you Boris Ivanovitch To me it is simply curious grotesque Well, well!

BORIS (*takes out pistol*) Keep your hand a little further from that bell if you please

ALEXIS I shan't ring You would hardly wait for them to answer the bell would you? No no! I'm not such a fool as to think you'd do that? Well well! I lift my hand and you shoot

BORIS Yes

ALEXIS Exactly Well I won't lift my hand

BORIS Nothing on earth can save you Alexis Alexandrovitch

ALEXIS Nor you my friend for that matter! You hardly expect to

leave the house shall we say unmolested?

BORIS I do not expect to leave it alive Excellency

ALEXIS No that would be asking too much I was here to let you in I won't be able to let you out again You will have lost a useful friend, Boris Ivanovitch

BORIS Your Excellency!

ALEXIS It is in your hands to end the interview Come come you must hate me a great deal my friend to give your own life for the sake of taking mine

BORIS I do not hate you

ALEXIS So? How odd! I thought that everyone of your sort hated me You might at least flatter me to the extent of showing some emotion Come come flatter me to that extent

BORIS I do not care to flatter you

ALEXIS Ah well well! I shall have to do without it then

BORIS My own feelings have nothing to do with it I am an instrument of God

ALEXIS God again! What has God to do with it? Do you happen to play a good game of chess?

BORIS (*nervously*) Why do you ask me such a thing?

ALEXIS Because you interrupted a game here Constantine threatened me with check mate in five more moves Check mate in five moves! No no! Not so easy as that

BORIS I have had enough of your jestings Excellency

ALEXIS You won't play then? Well well! I had promised myself to finish the game We shall see! We shall see!

BORIS Surely Your Excellency has something you wish to say—

ALEXIS I have told you once when you tire of the interview it is in your hands to end it What are you waiting for? You become tedious!

BORIS Have you no desire to pray Excellency?

ALEXIS Pray? Pray? Who would listen to me? No I'd rather chat

BORIS As Your Excellency likes

ALEXIS Yes yes well chat until you gather courage to do what you came for

BORIS It takes no courage to kill a thing like you

ALEXIS It takes a certain kind of courage to kill—rats

BORIS I have been chosen Excellency

ALEXIS So so! The lot fell on you did it? The honor! The distinction! You look at it in that way don't you? Like the rest of your kind you have political ideas eh?

BORIS I have no political ideas

ALEXIS No political ideas? Well, well! No personal hatred? Pray explain yourself man

BORIS I am a peasant My father and my father's father were peasants You are a noble Your line runs back to Tartar princes It is a matter of centuries of pain and slavery against centuries of oppression and violence I take no account of today only of yesterday and tomorrow Your acts have been cruel and harsh doubtless I hardly know I throw them out of the scale I throw out my own sufferings They are not enough in themselves to tip the balance You and I are nothing It is caste against caste I gave myself to the revolutionary party yes! I am their agent as you say but I know little of their ideas for Russia I care less I only know that the band to which I belong represents the struggle which I feel in my own breast I am their willing tool I do their will because the right of vengeance comes down to me in the blood

ALEXIS Yes, yes! A fanatic!

BORIS It is my order against yours

ALEXIS Ah your order against mine eh? Centuries of pain against centuries of oppression Well well! You set aside today do you? You throw your own little pains and penalties out of the scale on one side and my little tyrannies and floggings and acts of villainy out on the other? You see yourself only as the avenger of a caste against a caste The right of vengeance and the need of it comes down to you in the blood does it? You're exalted by the breath of dead peasants are you? It's because of that and only because of it that you take pride in the work you have set your hand to Huh! Grotesque! You strike the air with a rod of smoke You've stumbled upon the essence of the man

You're about to commit a fantastic mockery of Justice

BORIS I have held my hand too long!

ALEXIS Wait! There is still some thing to be said something for you to think of in the moment between the time you take my life and the time you take your own You are about to kill the man you might have been yourself You are about to—I and not you am Boris Ivan ovitch

BORIS What rubbish are you talking now?

ALEXIS You are Alexis Alexan drovitch!

BORIS Why! You are mad!

ALEXIS Wait! When you were a child you had a foster brother You ran with him in the fields You slept by his side at night You fought with him over rough toys and bits of food When you were seven years old a man on horseback came and took him away You never knew his true parentage and your father flogged you when you cried for him Can you remember that?

BORIS Aye I can remember that well

ALEXIS Your father deserted your mother the following year A little later she died She told you nothing of the other child You went to Kieff to the house of your uncle and he came apprenticed to a boot maker

BORIS Leave off! You can't mystify me by telling me the story of my own life It proves nothing Your

agents have ways of knowing such things what I was what I am everything

ALEXIS Yes! Leave all that! As you say it proves nothing Yet we are foster brothers you and I

BORIS A sign!

ALEXIS Our good mother was endowed with a grim sense of humor She sent her own boy to be reared as the son of princes and the little aristocrat left with her for safety at the time of the Makaroff meeting she sent to—well you know to what sort of a life she sent him

BORIS Give me a sign!

ALEXIS I have no sign to give you

BORIS Ah ah! What else? What else have you to tell me?

ALEXIS I and not you am the son of peasants Do you see now why I call your errand grotesque?

BORIS Lies! Lies! Lies! What do you expect to gain by telling me such lies?

ALEXIS Nothing

BORIS Do you expect me to believe you? Do you expect me to embrace you and clap my hat on my head and toss this pistol out the window and tell you to do what you like with me?

ALEXIS I expect nothing I know that I am one dead man talking to another

BORIS I can't fathom you I know there must be some trick up your sleeve but I can't fathom you

ALEXIS There is no trick You asked me why I chose to give you this opportunity to kill me I'm telling you, that's all

BORIS Lies! Utterly useless lies!

ALEXIS No! Utterly useless truth! Do you think I wish to believe myself Boris Ivanovitch Shamrayeff born a peasant? I who have sat in high places and given my life to preserving an order of men to which I do not belong which my blood ought to cry out against Do you think I would have believed it if the belief had not been forced upon me? I have ways of knowing truth from falsehood my friend You are striking at a man who is dead before you touch him What I have found out in the past week others already know I have come to the end I tell you I have been a fantastic dupe I cannot go on I would have killed myself today but I have a horror of taking my own life You have come in time to save me from that

BORIS Was that your only reason for seeing me?

ALEXIS I admit I was curious to see another man who had been as great a dupe as myself

BORIS Lies! Lies! What else? Have you anything more to say?

ALEXIS I only ask you to finish your work Unless you have a scruple against killing your— In which case go! The door is still open to you

BORIS (*sneering*) Very pretty! Very touching! Go back eh? And tell my comrades that I let Alexis the Red slip through my fingers because he

told me a child's story of changeling foster brothers? No no! (*He cocks his pistol*)

ALEXIS Kill me then!
(BORIS *raises the pistol*)

BORIS I—

ALEXIS Pull the trigger man!

BORIS I can't There's a chance that what you have said may be true after all (*He lays down the pistol*) And yet I can't live if it's false And, by God I can't live if it's true!

ALEXIS In either case we must both die

BORIS Aye you speak the truth there but I dare not kill you I tell you I dare not! There must be some way out! Some other way!

ALEXIS Are you brave enough to take poison? Yes! Good! Do you see this ring? I press a spring so There is a fine powder under the stone so! I drop a few grains into one of these glasses We draw lots One of us drinks the wine and the other still has your pistol to use! It is very simple after all

BORIS (*rises*) Yah! Now by God I see the trick! Lies! Lies! Every word of it was lies! I can see through you now You're devilishly cunning with your sleight of hand but I draw no lots for poison with the like of you

ALEXIS Have it your own way See there's more than enough for both Take the glass in your own hands divide it yourself pour the wine yourself and then to satisfy you I'll drink first

BORIS You carry the bluff to the bitter end do you? Well we'll see
(*He mixes the powder and pours the wine and hands one glass to ALEXIS*)

ALEXIS To your easy death brother
(*He lifts the glass and drinks*)

BORIS Ah! So you're a brave man after all! (*He lifts the glass and pauses*) What if I were to leave you now eh?

ALEXIS My men have orders to seize you the moment you leave the room

BORIS In that case! (*He lifts the glass*) To your final redemption brother!

ALEXIS Sit down!
(BORIS sits down)

BORIS Have we long to wait?

ALEXIS Perhaps five minutes It's a Chinese concoction They call it the draught of final oblivion I believe it to be painless I'm told that one becomes numb Do you find yourself becoming drowsy?

BORIS No My senses seem to be becoming more alert Your voice sounds very sharp and clear

ALEXIS Lift your hand

BORIS It seems very heavy Are you afraid of death Excellency?

ALEXIS (*eying him sharply*) No I am not afraid of death brother not in the least

BORIS Nor I!

ALEXIS Good! Now move your feet

BORIS I don't seem to be able to That's strange I can't feel anything

ALEXIS Nor I! Can you get out of your chair?

BORIS (*slowly*) I—I can hardly move my hand I might move by a supreme effort but I haven't the will I—I feel no pain only a ringing in my head

ALEXIS So? Well well! Can you still hear perfectly?

BORIS Yes—yes I can still hear

ALEXIS Hm hm

BORIS Tell me on your hope of redemption was what you said to me just now the truth?

ALEXIS On my hope of redemption eh?

BORIS If it was I ask you to forgive me

ALEXIS I have nothing to forgive

BORIS Thanks!

ALEXIS On my hope of redemption Boris Shamrayeff everything I told you was lies! Lies! Lies!

(BORIS struggles painfully to his feet and lurches toward the table where he has laid the pistol ALEXIS springs to the table seizes the pistol and tosses it out of the window BORIS supports himself against the edge of table half sitting half leaning against it his mouth open his eyes staring He sways dizzily ALEXIS stands before him.)

ALEXIS Well you can still speak can't you?

BORIS You fiend! You dog! You liar!
Ha ha ha! At least you can't escape!
No need for me to strike you!

ALEXIS Ha ha!

BORIS Well! Sneer at me if you like.
You are feeling the agony too. Alexis
Alexandrovitch. You can't deny it.

ALEXIS I am not dying. Boris Shamrayeff.

BORIS But I know! I saw! I saw
you drink! You're dying. Excel-
lency!

ALEXIS Yes we drank together.
Didn't we? Well well! And your eye
wasn't off me an instant, was it?
And you didn't lift your cup till
I'd drained the last drop of mine.
Did you? Well well well!

BORIS I saw you drink what I drank.

ALEXIS Yes I did drink it. Boris
Ivanovitch didn't I? But what is
sending you down to fry in Hell
with the stupid ghosts of your
bestial ancestors is only embarrass-
ing me with the slightest of head-
aches. (*He chuckles*)

BORIS It—it is not possible!

ALEXIS Eh? An oriental trick. A man
in constant fear of poison may ac-
custom himself little by little to
a dose that would blast the life of
an ordinary man. A fantastic pre-
caution these days, only interesting
to an antiquarian like myself. Well
well, you can hear me, can't you?
I tell you I could have taken the en-
tire mess, half of it seems to have
been enough for you. (*BORIS makes
an effort to get at ALEXIS but almost
sinks to the floor*) No use. Boris
Shamrayeff! I advise you to hold
fast to the table.

BORIS Why? Why have you done
this thing to me?

ALEXIS Body of St Michael! I am
of one order, you of another. You are
a terrorist, a Red, the blood of my
brother shot down in the streets of
Kronstadt, the lives of my friends,
the preservation of the sacred em-
pire—are these nothing? Nothing—
beside your dirty petitions of right!
Pah! God has delivered you into
my hands. I and not you am the
instrument of God today! Boris
Ivanovitch, can you still hear me?
Eh?

BORIS Yes!

ALEXIS So! So! One thing more!
Why did I risk my own life to get
yours? You would like to know that.
Wouldn't you? Why did I let you in
here at all? You'd ask that if you
could. Ha ha! Well, it was because
men were thinking that Alexis Alex-
androvitch wasn't what he used to
be, because I was beginning to think
so myself. Because I had begun to
doubt my own wits. I had to let my-
self be brought to bay. I had to look
into the muzzle of your pistol. I had
to put my life against yours in a
struggle where I had no other
weapon, no other help than this.
(*He taps his forehead*) I think it
unlikely that Constantine will
checkmate me in five moves today!

BORIS Fiend! Fiend! Fiend! (*He
crumples up and falls to the floor*)

ALEXIS So it's over, is it? Well well
well! (*He takes a cover from the
couch and throws it over BORIS and
stands over him*)

ALEXIS (*as if exorcising a ghost*)
To the night without stars! To the

mist that never lifts! To the bottom
of nothingness! Peace be with you!
*(He turns and taps the bell and
then seats himself at the chessboard
The FOOTMAN enters)*

FOOTMAN Your Excellency rang?

ALEXIS Go into the garden and find
Mr Constantine Tell him I am
ready to finish our game of chess

*(The FOOTMAN bows and with
draws)*

ALEXIS *(studying the moves on the
chessboard)* So! So! The bishop—
the queen! No! Yes yes! I have it!
I have it! Body of St Michael not
in five moves not in five moves
tonight! Ah! Ha ha! So! So! Well
well well! *(He rubs his hands softly
and looks up just as CONSTANTINE
enters)*

CURTAIN

Lithuania

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT

BY RUPERT BROOKE

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CHARACTERS

A STRANGER

THE MOTHER

THE DAUGHTER

THE FATHER

A YOUNG MAN

A VODKA SHOPKEEPER

THE VODKA SHOPKEEPER'S SON

LITHUANIA

The inside of a hut in Lithuania Table in center To the left of the table a ladder up to the upper story Behind in the back wall a long low window Doors in the right end of the back wall and the near end of the left wall Projecting from the right wall a large stone stove Beyond it a dresser with a basin etc It is early night in autumn Outside the window is a space of moonlight pine trees are vaguely visible beyond

At the left end of the table facing sideways is sitting the STRANGER finishing a meal The DAUGHTER is sitting on a stool before the stove back to the audience occasionally glancing at the STRANGER The MOTHER is moving to and fro with plates food etc between the table the stove and the dresser There is a lamp on the table

The STRANGER is in young middle age expensively rather flashily dressed medium height rather weakly built with black greased hair mustaches and a small pointed beard Excitable manner The MOTHER is fifty or more medium height strongly built but worn and rather bent thin face quiet and occasionally voluble The DAUGHTER is just past her youth a little shorter than the MOTHER but squarer heavy faced and immobile

STRANGER (*pushing chair back and finishing vodka*) That's good That's good I think I'll be turning in now I'm dog tired after that tramp through the woods By Jove I was lucky to find this house!

MOTHER If you'd bide a small bit My man'll be in from the fields any minute now

STRANGER (*getting up*) And aren't you two women afraid being alone in a lonely house like this these evenings?

MOTHER What's there for fear? Who'd want anything here to rob us? And is it likely any one'd want me? And Anna—Anna'd give them more than they came for She's stronger than most men

STRANGER (*rather uneasily bowing slightly*) Your daughter's a very well built girl

MOTHER She's strong She has to work in the fields with her Dad

STRANGER Ah I suppose it's hard enough to keep things going with only one man in the family—or (*quickly*) have you some sons no doubt?

MOTHER No There was one He ran off when he was thirteen

STRANGER (*with a nervous polite little laugh*) It's a pity Women want someone to protect them I always think Now wouldn't you, as a mother welcome him if ever he came back again to help you in your old age?

MOTHER (*undecidedly*) Well, I don't know——

DAUGHTER He was drowned
(*Short pause*)

STRANGER Oh! I beg your pardon—But your husband does he leave you alone—

(A man's shout from some distance)

MOTHER That's him I'll go and meet him If you'd bide a minute—I'd rather you saw him before you go to bed (Exit)

(STRANGER strolls rather swaggeringly to the stove)

STRANGER (apparently with slight suppressed excitement) I suppose a fine young girl like you must some times be sick of a life of working working in this gloomy place—beautiful as it is

DAUGHTER (looks at him steadily)
I'm—

STRANGER I'll warrant there's not much fun round here not many young men no dancing and so on ah you ought to be in a big town!

DAUGHTER (half to herself) I have my fun—

STRANGER It's wonderful in a big city! The glare and the roar of the streets Your blood swims with it It's a shame you should never know it Don't you see that you'll only grow hard and worn here stiffer and duller every day working working working then you'll be like your mother and at last you'll shrivel and be ugly and then you'll die Now what'd you say (laughing a little rather hysterically) if some good fairy suddenly came (looking at her) and promised to take you to a big city and show you everything and buy you dresses and jewels and give you the best of everything like a lady?
(Pause)

DAUGHTER (gets up suddenly and crosses to him limping slightly) I'm lame A dog bit me Would you like to see? (Pulls up her skirt and down her stocking and shows place under knee) Are ladies legs like that? See that cut? (Holding out her hand) That's a big nail did that What'd they say in cities to that hand? Feell (She grips him with her right hand just above the left knee and looks up smiling slightly He gives a little exclamation and draws back rather embarrassed) Have you ever felt a lady's hand like that? (A small pause She lets go and goes swinging across to the ladder and slowly up it and turning to the right exit)

(He sits down his hand on his leg Enter FATHER and MOTHER The FATHER is of middle height not very broad aged about fifty clean shaven of a rather excitable manner dark brown hair beginning to go gray)

MOTHER This is my husband

STRANGER (going toward him looking hard at him a little nervously) Are you the master of the house? How do you do? Your wife was kind enough to promise me a bed here I got lost in the forest and benighted I was very lucky to find a house

FATHER How were you in the wood dressed like that sir?

STRANGER (slight agitation) I'd lost my way I was trying to walk to Mohilev It was so fine—I'm very fond of walking—I thought I'd like to walk I'm going round the small towns of this part on—business Government business

FATHER Mohilev? You're a lot out of your way. You must be tired as a horse. And with that bag, You might have been robbed.

STRANGER (*opening the bag*) Oh, there's nothing much but papers in the bag. But (*excitedly*) I've a lot of money about me. (*Fumbling and pulling some notes from under his waistcoat*) See, There's a lot of money! It'd buy this house twice over and all in it. I dare bet you've never seen as much money as that on this table in your life before. (*Pulls out some more laughing hysterically. Finishes the glass of vodka*)

FATHER (*looking up at him*) No, Baron.
(*A pause. MOTHER goes to the stove*)

MOTHER It's not safe walking in these woods with all that upon you.

STRANGER I didn't meet a soul the whole day or see a house. This was the first I came to. I came on it straight out of the forest—from the west there. I was glad to see the light!

(*Short pause. DAUGHTER comes back quietly across back of room and sits down meanwhile. STRANGER continues*)

STRANGER It must be frightfully lonely here. I should think it would get on one's nerves. To hear the wind in the branches and watch the night coming on month after month. I declare I began to feel quite queer today walking all day alone among the trees. A merry company for me!
(*Short pause*)

FATHER There's a fistful of houses down below in the valley, three minutes down. You didn't get to them, Baron, they lie east. There's people there.

MOTHER (*setting table again*) He goes down to them.

FATHER And there's work enough to be done about the fields.

STRANGER But in winter you must find time heavy on your hands?

FATHER Ah—winter's coming.

STRANGER I expect you'll all be glad when you've saved up a bit and go away and live by some town.

FATHER That—that'll be when the rams milk—when God wakes from his snoring and remembers his poor

MOTHER (*reproving mechanically*) Oh, Ivan!

FATHER There's no living off this land.
(*Pause*)

STRANGER Well, I'm dog tired after that tramp through the woods. I think I'll be turning in. It must be late?

FATHER It should be after eight.

STRANGER (*laughing*) Why I declare you've no clock! (*Pause. Laughing loud*) Why you'll not know what time to go to bed! I must leave you mine for the night. I really must. (*Taking his out of his waist coat*) Look! It's good gold, all of it! I'll hang it up there. I'll bet you've never seen a gold watch hanging up on your wall, eh?

(DAUGHTER looks at MOTHER behind his back MOTHER at DAUGHTER FATHER looks at each of the three drumming on the table Pause)

MOTHER (taking up the lamp)
Shall I show you the bed Baron?

STRANGER Yes I really must turn in (Turns to the watch) There what do you say to that! (Goes up to DAUGHTER) Good night my little Anna (Puts hand on her shoulder and presses it) Good night! (She stands stiffly up dropping a slight curtsey STRANGER turns to FATHER) Good night! Good night! I'm afraid I've robbed you of the best part of your meal I must apologize! But I'll pay for it You shan't regret your hospitality (Goes up toward him as if to shake his hand or embrace him hesitates and passes on after MOTHER up the ladder)

FATHER (after him) It's poor food but you're welcome to it

MOTHER (up the ladder) It's a poor room for you—we sleep to the right here You'll not be troubled if you hear us moving— (Exeunt talking)
(Light from stove DAUGHTER standing at stove FATHER sits down to eat at end of table facing audience)

FATHER (eating) You're always talking about men There's one for you Why don't you go to him? He was looking at you And he's drunk a lot

DAUGHTER (bringing soup and pouring it in) He's an undersized white handed, dirty little man

FATHER You're afraid You're always afraid

DAUGHTER He's not a man He's a little weak chattering half a man like you

(FATHER turns round savagely and catches her with wrench by the upper arm A spoon is knocked from her hand)

DAUGHTER (twisting her arm free and hitting his hand down without raising her voice) If you hit me I'll kill you (Goes to seat and sits down with her back to the audience)

MOTHER (enters with lamp places it on table and puts it out) Have you brought anything?

FATHER No There's a curse on these woods There's not a hare nor a bird in them They're as quiet as the dead

MOTHER (sits down on the farther side of the stove three quarters face to the audience) We can't get through the winter We've nothing

FATHER I'm hungry There's never food enough in this bloody house There's no living off this land

MOTHER I gave him all there was I knew he was a rich man We'll get enough from him for eight days maybe

FATHER And then?

MOTHER We've always got through

FATHER (getting up excitedly) I'm sick of it I say I'll go off to the towns There's money there Why should I stay here and work for you two as well as myself? I'll go off alone (Catches sight of watch)

Look at that! Why should he have that and we be starving? It would keep us a year. How did he get it? Who is he? Why did he talk like that?

MOTHER He had drunk. He is a rich man.

FATHER He's mad. I say. Who ever heard tell of a man walking through these woods because he liked it if he wasn't mad? And in that coat and with a bag?

DAUGHTER No one saw him come.

MOTHER If he's mad we might get a reward for keeping him. His parents would be very rich.

FATHER He's not mad. But he's queer. Something was driving him mad. Why should he have come here? All that money—the way he talked—— Do you think it's his?
(MOTHER and DAUGHTER look at each other scarcely moving their heads at intervals through the conversation.)

MOTHER If it's not his——

FATHER He looked like a thief. He's a thief's manner. He stole it. I say. He's escaping. Hiding. That's why he came here.

DAUGHTER No one knows he's here.

MOTHER If he's a thief we might get a reward for giving him up, or something.

FATHER (snatching down watch) This gold thing, and all that money what right has he to it? There may be people starving because he stole it? He looked like a thief.

DAUGHTER He was a little weak undersized man——
(Pause.)

FATHER (leaning against the end of the table) I'm working and keeping you two and doing my best and I'm starving. And he's a thief and alone and he has all that money. If there were a God would He let that be?

MOTHER Ivan!
(Pause.)

FATHER (as if unwillingly and still louder) We've as good right to it as him. What's money to a hunted man alone?

MOTHER Hush! You'll wake him!

FATHER (much lower) Why do I care if he hears?
(Pause.)

DAUGHTER He'll sleep deep being tired.
(Pause. The light from the stove is lower.)

FATHER Why do you look at me?
(Pause.)

MOTHER (her hands fumbling drawing silently closer to the stove) We'll never get through the winter.
(Pause.)

FATHER (shrilly) Why do you look at me? What are you both thinking? I don't know what you're thinking.
(Pause.)

MOTHER You're shaking. Ivan. You're making the table rattle——
(Pause.)

FATHER Why are you looking at me? I can't see your eyes
(*Longer pause*)

FATHER (*nearly crying*) I killed a man in fight once—in fight My God I—not— (*Small pause* *They all rise silently*) I must think Say something Tomorrow—

DAUGHTER Now

FATHER Tomorrow

MOTHER Now

FATHER He's our guest—

MOTHER He's a thief
(*Small pause* DAUGHTER begins to light lamp)

MOTHER (*very low and quick*) He's asleep— Only once! He can't struggle We'll hold him No one'll ever know We must have the money—You're a coward!
(FATHER meanwhile pulls knife out of sheath takes lamp mechanically from DAUGHTER and makes a few steps toward the ladder The women follow)

FATHER I can do it (*Takes a few steps looks back*) You're filthy Stay here You're not to touch him I'll do it (*Goes up ladder quickly and quietly*)
(The DAUGHTER stands by bottom of ladder leaning against it MOTHER goes back toward stove Long pause Slight sounds DAUGHTER puts one foot slowly on bottom rung of ladder Suddenly FATHER appears and comes down Puts lamp on table Leans against table shivering MOTHER comes forward Pause FATHER nods)

DAUGHTER The knife's clean

MOTHER Did you? —

FATHER I— (*Crumblingly*) No! I feel dead sick I couldn't I didn't go in I've been working all day I'm sick (*Coughs and retches slightly*)

MOTHER You must

FATHER I can't—like this Vodka I want drink in me

MOTHER He drank it You must
(FATHER goes unsteadily to back of stage Puts on his coat)

FATHER (*fumbling in his pocket*) I'm going down to the shop to get drink I've got a few kopeks I'll get so I can do it I'll drink till I'd stick Almighty God (*Straightens himself speaks more controlledly*) When I come back you'll see I'll be ready to knife anybody I tell you I'm tired now and sick You can't kill a man when your throats full of stink and you're going to be sick I've been working all day (*Fumbling at the door*) I'll be back in no time I swear I'll kill him I'll drink murder into me My God! (*Exit*)
(His figure is seen passing the window going across to the left running rather slowly MOTHER and DAUGHTER watch him cross then listen a moment No sound from above MOTHER puts out the lamp They sit down by the stove in their usual places DAUGHTER with her back to the audience The DAUGHTER opens the mouth of the stove puts log of wood in and leaves the mouth open A certain amount of light comes out)

DAUGHTER He's a coward

MOTHER He's all right

DAUGHTER He's a coward

MOTHER He's not that He thinks so much You can't understand He'll be all right when he's got drink in him It'll stop him thinking

DAUGHTER If I'd started off to kill a man I wouldn't need to stop to drink

MOTHER You'd—I was afraid we wouldn't get him to it

DAUGHTER He'll get drunk

MOTHER He's not got enough money to get drunk on—Besides he knows what he's gone for

DAUGHTER He's gone to get away
(Short pause) It's hard waiting

MOTHER He'll do it when he comes back *(Gets up and goes to foot of ladder and wanders back again Standing)* I know him *(Takes down watch and examines it)* Do you think he's a thief?

DAUGHTER I don't know We'll be rich We'll get away from here

MOTHER *(hangs up watch)* It's the same anywhere But we won't starve then

DAUGHTER It's hell waiting
(Pause) One must do things straight and not think It'll be harder

MOTHER *(going irresolutely toward the window)* It's bright outside *(Suddenly)* No one can have seen in can they? When he was at supper? *(Turns)*

DAUGHTER No They couldn't see from the road

MOTHER *(comes back and sits down)* Anyhow who could come by here at night?

DAUGHTER They come here some times

MOTHER Sometimes! They come a lot to see you don't they?—Young men Twice a year! When I was a girl—

DAUGHTER You're always jealous of me—

(The voices get a little shrill naggingly not angrily)

MOTHER Jealous! When I was a girl I'd a dozen after me
(STRANGER appears silently at top of ladder in shirt and trousers bare foot and comes quickly down holding a burning match in his left hand looking rather dazedly excited)

DAUGHTER It's a dirty thing to be old and jealous

MOTHER You've always hated me I'm your mother it's wrong to hate your mother—you're not natural

DAUGHTER It's you hate me You're my mother right enough I've seen love turn—

MOTHER You don't know what it is to be a mother You never will very like
(The STRANGER reaches the bottom of the ladder it creaks The DAUGHTER at the second creak, looks round and stares agape startled The MOTHER sees her face breaks off looks round and jumps up exclaiming Short pause)

MOTHER What do you want?

STRANGER Oh! Isn't your husband here?

MOTHER He's gone out—Has any thing disturbed you Baron?

STRANGER No—you—see—no—I wanted to speak to him I thought—I wanted to do it tonight—It doesn't matter—When will he be back?

MOTHER I—I don't know—

DAUGHTER Not for hours maybe He comes back very late

STRANGER (*advancing a step or two*) Oh tomorrow'll do

MOTHER (*going quickly to the window*) It's very cold (*Folds rather old wooden shutters across and bars them with a great rusty iron bar The STRANGER is staring with a vague uneasiness*) Well lock up and go to bed My man comes in later Did you want anything Baron?

STRANGER No I only thought if he was here I'd something I wanted to get clear before I could sleep It's nothing (*Drifts back to ladder*)

MOTHER We didn't disturb you Baron?—Our talking?

STRANGER Oh no I assure you! I—I went to sleep for a bit and woke up suddenly I felt somehow I shouldn't go to sleep again until I'd got clear—

MOTHER You'll sleep sound enough Baron You'll not hear anything

STRANGER (*more abruptly*) Yes I'm sorry to have startled you—A fancy— Tomorrow'll do—I'll sleep like a log (*Starts climbing up ladder*)

MOTHER (*still in front of window*) Yes You must be tired

(*DAUGHTER stands up Exit STRANGER MOTHER comes forward MOTHER and DAUGHTER converse in whispers*)

MOTHER What did he mean? Why did he come down?

DAUGHTER I don't know

MOTHER Had he heard?

DAUGHTER I don't think so Perhaps he woke up frightened

MOTHER Or he's mad

DAUGHTER He was queer all the time

MOTHER Could he have been drunk—on that little? Men do queer rest less things when they're drunk—

DAUGHTER Will he come again?

MOTHER It makes it worse—that he's like that—that— (*Knocks at door The women clutch at each other and stand looking around Knocks again MOTHER whispers*) We must open (*DAUGHTER nods MOTHER goes over to door DAUGHTER moves quickly to fireplace and takes watch down and thrusts it in her bosom MOTHER opens door slightly looks out opens it under saying*) Ah step in Paul! (*She admits a YOUNG MAN carrying a hare The YOUNG MAN stamps his feet and takes off his coat He is rather*

*tall neutral colored solid faced
aged 25 clean shaven*)

DAUGHTER Never mind her!
(Pause)

MOTHER You're calling very late—

YOUNG MAN I didn't know you went
to bed so early

YOUNG MAN It's not half past eight
I only stepped in for a minute

DAUGHTER You've not often been

MOTHER I was just tidying up We
go to bed early (*Keeps looking
round toward the ladder*)

YOUNG MAN Maybe I'd not have
come if I'd known— You're not
very hospitable in this house

YOUNG MAN I just stepped in to
bring you this (*Throwing hare on
table*)

DAUGHTER It was good of you to
bring this

YOUNG MAN I snared her today

MOTHER It's very good of you
(*Taking it up and looking at it*)

DAUGHTER I wish— I think
Mother wants to shut the house up

YOUNG MAN I'd like to get warm a
minute
(*DAUGHTER and YOUNG MAN come
toward stove*)

YOUNG MAN Don't you want to see
me?

DAUGHTER It's not that I'm very
tired You'd better go Paul

MOTHER (*takes lantern and goes to
ward ladder*) I'll be putting
straight upstairs (*Goes up ladder
To DAUGHTER*) You'll be coming
soon (*Exit right*)
(*DAUGHTER takes up hare and
handles it*)

YOUNG MAN You weren't in your
fields today I went to look

DAUGHTER I've done a lot (*Comes
up nearer to him*) Go Paul I want
to see you Come—any day (*In
sudden anger*) Go will you?

YOUNG MAN It's close in here
(*Pause*) It's dirty and cold outside
Is your father here?

YOUNG MAN (*putting a hand on each
of her shoulders*) Why do you
never say things? I've never under-
stood you

DAUGHTER He's gone down to
drink

DAUGHTER (*hitting his arm down
and shaking herself free*) Go! I'll
see you again

YOUNG MAN It's good of your moth-
er to leave us

DAUGHTER She's putting straight,
upstairs

YOUNG MAN (*catching her quietly
by the wrist as she hits his arm
down*) I'll stay a bit maybe

YOUNG MAN (*grinning*) She's not
moving about There's no noise

DAUGHTER (*pulls herself free*) Go!

YOUNG MAN What if I don't

DAUGHTER (*seizing him by the upper arm in a passion and making him reel*) Go will you?

YOUNG MAN (*pulls her in to him they struggle*) You're not so strong! (*After a second's struggle he kisses her on the mouth. Their mouths part and she kisses him again. She is pressed back and strikes the edge of the table which rattles. Released she leans back against it. He grins.*)

DAUGHTER (*half whispering*) You'll have something over!

YOUNG MAN You're not so strong!

DAUGHTER Go for God's sake

YOUNG MAN I'll come again

DAUGHTER Yes tomorrow

YOUNG MAN (*picking up his coat*) I'll come earlier one day. Come out into the lane and meet me

DAUGHTER Yes

YOUNG MAN (*putting on his coat*) We'll have things to say

DAUGHTER I've got to go to bed now

YOUNG MAN Give me a kiss! (*She stands impassive. He kisses her.*) Good night
(*Exit YOUNG MAN. She shuts the door after him quietly.*)

MOTHER (*comes quickly down*) He's gone
(*DAUGHTER nods*)

MOTHER (*jerking her head toward the ladder*) If he had come down when Paul was here!—

DAUGHTER Someone else may come in

MOTHER A lot of young men smell you out don't they?

DAUGHTER You fool!— We must have the money. I want to get away from here

MOTHER Do you think anyone'd look at you in a town? They like them fine made there

DAUGHTER He must come soon. He must do it (*Sits down*)
(*Pause*)

DAUGHTER He's been away an hour

MOTHER Five minutes more like
(*Pause*)

MOTHER (*starting suddenly up*) What was that?

DAUGHTER What?

MOTHER A step

DAUGHTER Where?

MOTHER Outside. It's Ivan

DAUGHTER I heard nothing

MOTHER Perhaps it's somebody else
(*Pause. Silence*)

DAUGHTER It wasn't anything

MOTHER If he dares again, this time—

DAUGHTER He s a coward

MOTHER He s tired Perhaps he ll be drunk
(Pause)

MOTHER (*shifting*) I cant bear waiting It s as if somebody s watching us
(Pause)

(DAUGHTER rises and limps over to a box on ledge beyond the stove rummages there)

MOTHER (*huskily*) What are you doing?

DAUGHTER These knives are old and weak

MOTHER You—— Sit down He ll come

DAUGHTER (*stooping over box of firewood*) I ll go mad waiting (*Rises with an axe in her hand*) This isn t very sharp But it s heavy

MOTHER What do you mean?

DAUGHTER (*lighting lamp on the table*) Hush We can do it

MOTHER (*getting up*) You mustn t Do you think?—

DAUGHTER Hes a weak little man Take off your skirt and throw it over him up to the neck and hold it down so as he cant get his hands out Hold fast
(MOTHER slips off her outer skirt DAUGHTER takes up the lantern)

MOTHER (*going to the ladder*) Come on quickly for Christ s sake Oh thank God

DAUGHTER We ll put the lantern on the shelf

(*They go quietly up the ladder— DAUGHTER first and disappear left Pause Slight muffled noises A shout A crashing thud A groan broken by a thud A succession of rather regular heavy thuds While these are still going on there is the sound of quick steps above and the MOTHER comes half falling down the ladder sobbing quietly The thuds cease*)

MOTHER (*collapsing onto a stool at the table*) O Christ! Stop! Stop! O Christ!

(*The DAUGHTER comes slowly downstairs the light in one hand holding the axe stiffly down with the other drawing long difficult audible breaths The MOTHER ceases sobbing*)

MOTHER Why did you go on hitting?

DAUGHTER (*putting lamp on table*) I couldn t help it

MOTHER You went on and on I thought you were mad He cried out on his mother at first

DAUGHTER (*standing*) He didnt

MOTHER He cried on his mother She ll never know You went on and on hitting You were horrible Why did you?

DAUGHTER I couldn t stop (*Goes round and stands by the stove*)

MOTHER Why did you go on and on hitting? I thought you were mad I hated you

DAUGHTER I couldn't help it
(Pause)

MOTHER Why are you still holding that thing?
(DAUGHTER goes up beyond stove and throws axe into woodbasket Returns and sits in her seat back to audience)

MOTHER I'll never use that skirt again

DAUGHTER You'll never need to
(Pause MOTHER begins slowly clearing remains of supper away DAUGHTER puts her head in her hands and begins sobbing)

MOTHER Well he won't move now We'll make Ivan bury him out in the woods tonight or tomorrow We'll get away from here before the thick of winter (*Faint noise from outside some distance away*) We'll have plenty—What's that? It's Ivan coming back (*Noise louder and increasing*) Get ready lass It's done There's someone with him I hear talking Perhaps it's somebody else Get up—look yourself We must be ready

DAUGHTER (*jumping up*) It's done We can tell him it's done I'm glad We can get away We'll be rich I'll wear silk

MOTHER (*breaking in*) It's Ivan I hear his name Who's he bringing with him? Is he mad?

DAUGHTER He's drunk
(*Rattling at door*)

MOTHER He's arrested (*Goes to door and opens it*)
(VODKA SHOPKEEPER and his SON enter, the FATHER between them)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER a tall blond jolly man of about forty hairy face and inclined to be stout His SON eighteen slight rather darker and self-conscious VODKA SHOPKEEPER holds a boot in his right hand His SON holds a vodka bottle They are supporting the FATHER who is drunk dazed looking and dragging He has only one boot on The VODKA SHOPKEEPER and his SON are also slightly drunk VODKA SHOPKEEPER excited SON sly and flushed MOTHER and DAUGHTER both standing)

VODKA-SHOPKEEPER Evening missus! We've brought your man home (*Laughing*)

MOTHER Ivan——?

VODKA SHOPKEEPER He wanted to come alone He said he had some thing to do (*Laughs*) He said he had to go quietly He would take his boot off (*Holds boot up*) We couldn't stop him He couldn't get the other off Said he had to go quietly' You should have seen him going quietly—laugh—my God!
(FATHER asleep collapses at the foot of the ladder)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER Here—hold up He's gone dazed from the open air Give him a drop to wake him up (*SON pours from bottle into glass left on table shakes FATHER and makes him drink it*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER'S SON He came into the shop shivering and white My God! Drink he says I gave him a glass He drank two before he spoke "I've got something to do," he said (*Giggling*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER When I came in he was drunk—blind He can't have eaten all day getting like that on three glasses He was talking big about his luck We all had a glass to his luck As much as you like now I said

FATHER (*suddenly*) Hush! (*Tries to begin to climb ladder—falls against it*)

MOTHER (*screaming*) Ivan!

VODKA SHOPKEEPER (*delightedly*) That's it Oh he's all right He won't hurt himself You should have seen him hopping along in the mud like a lame hare I've got to go quietly he said Laugh! We were nearly sick I've luck he said God's good to me "Here's to God I said I know your luck No more starving now! We all drank (*Pours out and drinks from glass*) (*MOTHER and DAUGHTER stare suddenly at him FATHER rises to his feet and stands wavering—holds up one hand*)

FATHER Quietly! Quietly! (*Nods his head*) (*MOTHER runs to him and holds him by the arm still staring at the VODKA SHOPKEEPER*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER'S SON (*giggling*) He kept saying it Quietly he said Didn't he Dad? I've something to do—quietly he said Not a sound he said He took his boot off and hopped through the mud like—like—a lame hare!

MOTHER (*to VODKA SHOPKEEPER*) You know—

VODKA SHOPKEEPER (*grinning*) Rather

MOTHER (*calmly*) Of course you share—the luck

VODKA SHOPKEEPER (*cheerfully*) I get what comes to me I told him so We all get a little It's a great day He's up there I suppose (*Nodding to the upper story*) (*MOTHER nods*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER Tired eh? (*Laughs*)

MOTHER (*after a short pause leaving go of IVAN*) You see— (*Begins again*) He told you?

VODKA SHOPKEEPER (*expanding*) Rather! First in the village he came to (*FATHER drinks again*) I'd never have known him He knew me—after twenty years! We had a glass He told me of his joke I'll be the first to congratulate them in the morning I said isn't often one gets a son back! Ivan'll be glad of a son! (*Pause—IVAN waves his glass puts on an air of mystery says Something to be done sits down on the ladder and gets into a doze His glass crashes to the ground*)

MOTHER (*vacantly*) Son— Son— (*Leaning on table*) (*DAUGHTER stands stiff*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER (*roaring with laughter*) It's turned all their heads! He said to me I've such a game on I'll knock and say I'm a rich man who's lost his way in the woods and I want a night's lodging and I'll show em my money and I'll watch em and see em all again and then in the morning I'll say Behold your son which was lost and is found! Excited—wasn't he just You'll never keep the secret all

night I said And he hasn't I knew
he wouldn't I'll be the first to con-
gratulate them in the morning I
said And I'm doing it tonight!
(*Drinks from bottle*)
(*Pause MOTHER looking down at
the table*)

DAUGHTER You knew him?

VODKA SHOPKEEPER (*blearily*) Bless
you, yes! When he talked of old
times What are you all looking like
that for? Didn't he come on here?

DAUGHTER He did
(*Pause VODKA SHOPKEEPER stares
resentfully*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER You're not very
cheerful
(*MOTHER goes suddenly to her
chair saying*)

MOTHER He cried out Mother!
(*Sits down*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER (*genuinely*) I'll
be bound he did!

FATHER (*waking up suddenly*)
Something to be done
(*MOTHER suddenly screams*)

DAUGHTER Stop it Mother!

VODKA SHOPKEEPER What is it?
What have you done?
(*VODKA SHOPKEEPER and his SON
step a little backward toward door
MOTHER continues crying and sob-
bing loudly*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER (to DAUGHTER)

Why are you looking like that?
Didn't he tell you who he was?

DAUGHTER No

VODKA SHOPKEEPER What have you
done? Where is he? (*Raises his head
suddenly and shouts*) Ivan! Young
Ivan! Ivan!

FATHER (*fumbling with his other
boot*) Not a sound!
(*Pause*)

MOTHER He cried out Mother!
You went on and on hitting
(*Screams*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER What have you
done? You've— (*Backs toward the
door staring—the SON behind him*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER'S SON She's got
something on her hands Father!
(*MOTHER still screaming*)

DAUGHTER Stop it Mother!
(*FATHER starts clambering up lad-
der stumbling SON slips out of
door*)

VODKA SHOPKEEPER You've— (*Hur-
ries out slamming door*)
(*MOTHER screaming*)

DAUGHTER Stop it Mother!

FATHER (*vaguely with immense air
of mystery and determination*)
Very softly now Quietly quietly!
Quietly— (*Falls onto ladder*)

DAUGHTER They'll put me in
prison!

CURTAIN

The Valiant

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY HOLWORTHY HALL AND
ROBERT MIDDLEMASS

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CHARACTERS

WARDEN HOLT *about 60*

FATHER DALY *the prison chaplain*

JAMES DYKE *the Prisoner*

JOSEPHINE PARIS *the Girl about 18*

DAN *a Jailer*

AN ATTENDANT

SCENE—*The Warden's office in the State's Prison at Wethersfield, Connecticut*

TIME—*About half-past eleven on a rainy night*

THE VALIANT

The curtain rises upon the WARDEN'S office in the State's Prison at Wethersfield Connecticut. It is a large, cold, unfriendly apartment with bare floors and staring, whitewashed walls. It is furnished only with the WARDEN'S flat topped desk and swivel-chair, with a few straight backed chairs, one beside the desk and others against the walls, with a water cooler and an eight day clock. On the WARDEN'S desk are a telephone instrument, a row of electric push buttons, and a bundle of forty or fifty letters. At the back of the room are two large windows, crossed with heavy bars. At the left there is a door to an anteroom, and at the right there are two doors, of which the more distant leads to the office of the deputy warden, and the nearer is seldom used.

WARDEN HOLT, dressed in a dark brown sack suit, with a negligee shirt and black string tie, carelessly knotted in a bow, is seated at his desk, reflectively smoking a long thin cigar. He is verging toward sixty, and his responsibilities have printed themselves in italics upon his countenance. His brown hair and bushy eyebrows are heavily shot with gray; there is a deep parenthesis of wrinkles at the corners of his mouth, and innumerable fine lines about his eyes. His bearing indicates that he is accustomed to rank as a despot, and yet his expression is far from that of an unreasoning tyrant. He is no sentimentalist, but he believes that in each of us there is a constant oscillation of good and evil, and that all evil should be justly punished in this world, and that all good should be generously rewarded—in the next.

Behind the WARDEN, the prison chaplain stands at one of the barred windows, gazing steadily out into the night. FATHER DALY is a slender, white haired priest of somewhat more than middle age; he is dressed in slightly shabby clericals. His face is calm, intellectual, and inspiring, but just at this moment it gives evidence of a peculiar depression.

The WARDEN blows a cloud of smoke to the ceiling, inspects the cigar critically, drums on the desk, and finally peers over his shoulder at the chaplain. He clears his throat and speaks brusquely:

THE WARDEN: Has it started to rain?

(He draws a deep breath and comes slowly to the center of the room.)

FATHER DALY (answers without turning): Yes, it has.

We haven't much longer to wait.

THE WARDEN (glaring at his cigar and impatiently tossing it aside): It would rain tonight. (His tone is vaguely resentful, as though the weather had added a needless fraction to his impatience.)

THE WARDEN: No, thank God! (He gets up and goes to the water cooler, with the glass halfway to his lips; he pauses.) Was he quiet when you left him?

FATHER DALY (glances at a big silver watch): It's past eleven o'clock.

FATHER DALY (a trifle abstractedly): Yes, yes, he was perfectly calm, and I believe he'll stay so to the very end.

THE WARDEN (*finishes his drink comes back to his desk and lights a fresh cigar*) You've got to hand it to him Father I never saw such nerve in all my life It isn't bluff and it isn't a trance either like some of 'em have—it's plain nerve You've certainly got to hand it to him (*He shakes his head in frank admiration*)

FATHER DALY (*sorrowfully*) That's the pity of it—that a man with all his courage hasn't a better use for it Even now it's very difficult for me to reconcile his character as I see it, with what we know he's done

THE WARDEN (*continues to shake his head*) He's got my goat, all right

FATHER DALY (*with a slight grimace*) Yes and he's got mine too

THE WARDEN When he sent for you tonight, I hoped he was going to talk

FATHER DALY He did talk very freely

THE WARDEN What about?

FATHER DALY (*smiles faintly and sits beside the desk*) Most everything

THE WARDEN (*looks up quickly*) Himself?

FATHER DALY No That seems to be the only subject he isn't interested in

THE WARDEN (*sits up to his desk, and leans upon it with both elbows*) He still won't give you any hint about who he really is?

FATHER DALY Not the slightest He doesn't intend to either He intends to die as a man of mystery to us Sometimes I wonder if he isn't just as much of a mystery to himself

THE WARDEN Oh he's trying to shield somebody that's all James Dyke isn't his right name—we know that and we know all the rest of his story is a fake too Well where's his motive? I'll tell you where it is It's to keep his family and his friends wherever they are from knowing what's happened to him Lots of 'em have the same idea but I never knew one to carry it as far as this before You've certainly got to hand it to him All we know is that we've got a man under sentence and we don't know who he is or where he comes from or any thing else about him any more than we did four months ago

FATHER DALY It takes moral courage for a man to shut himself away from his family and his friends like that They would have comforted him

THE WARDEN Not necessarily What time is it?

FATHER DALY Half past eleven

THE WARDEN (*rises and walks over to peer out of one of the barred windows*) I guess I'm getting too old for this sort of thing A necktie party didn't use to bother me so much but every time one comes along nowadays I've got the blue devils beforehand and afterward And this one is just about the limit

FATHER DALY It certainly isn't a pleasant duty even with the worst of them.

THE WARDEN (*wheels back abruptly*) But what gets *me* is why I should hate this one more than any of the others The boy is guilty as hell

FATHER DALY Yes he killed a man Wilfully feloniously and with malice aforethought

THE WARDEN And he pleaded guilty So he deserves just what he's going to get

FATHER DALY That is the law But has it ever occurred to you Warden that every now and then when a criminal behaves in a rather gentlemanly fashion to us we instinctively think of him as just a little less of a criminal?

THE WARDEN Yes it has But all the same this front of his makes me as nervous as the devil He pleaded guilty all right but he doesn't *act* guilty I feel just as if tonight I was going to do something every bit as criminal as he did I can't help it And when I get to feeling like that why I guess it's pretty nearly time I sent in my resignation

FATHER DALY (*reflectively*) His whole attitude has been very remarkable Why only a few minutes ago I found myself comparing it with the fortitude that the Christian martyrs carried to their death and yet—

THE WARDEN He's no martyr

FATHER DALY I know it And he's anything in the world but a Christian That was just what I was going to say

THE WARDEN Has he got any religious streak in him at all?

FATHER DALY I'm afraid he hasn't He listens to me very attentively but— (*He shrugs his shoulders*) It's only because I offer him companionship Anybody else would do quite as well—and any other topic would suit him better

THE WARDEN Well if he wants to face God as a heathen *we* can't force him to change his mind

FATHER DALY (*with gentle reproach*) No but we can never give up trying to save his immortal soul And his soul tonight seems as dark and foreboding to me as a haunted house would seem to the small boys down in Wethersfield But I haven't given up hope

THE WARDEN No—you wouldn't

FATHER DALY Are you going to talk with him again yourself?

THE WARDEN (*opens a drawer of his desk, and brings out a large envelope*) I'll have to I've still got some Liberty Bonds that belong to him (*He gazes at the envelope and smiles grimly*) That was a funny thing—when the newspaper syndicate offered him twenty-five hundred for his autobiography he jumped at it so quick I was sure he wanted the money for something or other (*He slaps the envelope on the desk*) But now the bonds are here waiting for him he won't say what to do with 'em Know why? (*FATHER DALY shakes his head*) Why of course you do! Because the story he wrote was pure bunk from start to finish and the only reason he jumped at the chance of writing it was so he could pull the wool over everybody's head a little farther He don't want the bonds but

I've got to do *something* with em
(*He pushes a button on the desk*)
And besides I want to make one
more try at finding out who he is

FATHER DALY Shall I go with you
to see him or do you want to see
him alone?

THE WARDEN (*sits deliberating with
one hand at his forehead and the
other hand tapping the desk*) Fa-
ther you gave me a thought—I be-
lieve I'm going to do something
tonight that's never been done be-
fore in this prison—that is to say—
not in all the twenty eight years
that I've been warden

FATHER DALY What's that?

THE WARDEN (*who has evidently
come to an important decision raps
the desk more forcibly with his
knuckles*) Instead of our going to
see him I'll have that boy brought
into this office and let him sit here
with you and me until the time
comes for us all to walk through
that door to the execution room

FATHER DALY (*startled*) What on
earth is your idea in doing a thing
like that?

THE WARDEN Because maybe if he
sits here awhile with just you and
me and we go at him right he'll
loosen up and tell us about himself
It'll be different from being in his
cell it'll be sort of free and easy and
maybe he'll weaken And then, be-
sides if we take him to the scaffold
through this passage-way, maybe I
can keep the others quiet If they
don't know when the jobs being
done they may behave emselves
I don't want any such yelling and
screeching tonight as we had with

that Greek (*A JAILER in blue uni-
form enters from the deputy's room
and stands waiting*) Dan I want
you to get Dyke and bring him to
me here (*The JAILER stares
blankly at him and the WARDEN'S
voice takes on an added note of
authority*) Get Dyke and bring him
in here to me

THE JAILER Yes sir (*He starts to
obey the order but halts in the door-
way and turns as the WARDEN
speaks again It is apparent that the
WARDEN is a strict disciplinarian of
the prison staff*)

THE WARDEN Oh Dan!

THE JAILER Yes sir?

THE WARDEN How nearly ready are
they?

THE JAILER They'll be all set in ten
or fifteen minutes sir Twenty min-
utes at the outside

THE WARDEN (*very sharp and mag-
isterial*) Now I don't want any
hitch or delay in this thing tonight
If there is somebody's going to get
in awful Dutch with me Pass that
along

THE JAILER There won't be none
sir

THE WARDEN When everything's
ready—not a second before—you
let me know

THE JAILER Yes sir

THE WARDEN I'll be right here with
Dyke and Father Daly

THE JAILER (*eyes widening*) Here?

THE WARDEN (*peremptorily*) Yes here!

THE JAILER (*crushes down his astonishment*) Yes sir

THE WARDEN When everything and everybody is ready you come from the execution room through the passage— (*He gestures toward the nearer door on the right*) Open that door quietly and stand there

THE JAILER Yes sir

THE WARDEN You don't have to say anything and I don't want you to say anything Just stand there That all clear?

THE JAILER Yes sir

THE WARDEN That'll be the signal for us to start—understand?

THE JAILER Yes sir

THE WARDEN (*draws a deep breath*) All right Now bring Dyke to me

THE JAILER Yes sir (*He goes out dazedly*)

FATHER DALY What about the witnesses and the reporters?

THE WARDEN They're having their sandwiches and coffee now—the deputy'll have 'em seated in another ten or fifteen minutes Let 'em wait (*His voice becomes savage*) I'd like to poison the lot of 'em Reporters! Witnesses! (*The telephone bell rings*) Hello—yes—yes—what's that?—Yes yes right here—who wants him? (*To FATHER DALY*) Father it's the Governor! (*His expression is tense*)

FATHER DALY (*his voice also gives evidence of incredulity and hope*) What! (*He walks swiftly over to the desk*) Is it about Dyke?

THE WARDEN Ssh (*He turns to the telephone*) Yes this is Warden Holt speaking Hello—oh hello Governor Fuller how are you? Oh I'm between grass and hay thanks Well this isn't my idea of a picnic exactly—yes—yes— Oh I should say in about half an hour or so—everything's just about ready (*His expression gradually relaxes and FATHER DALY with a little sigh and shake of the head turns away*) Oh no there won't be any slip up—yes we made the regular tests one this afternoon and another at nine o'clock tonight— Oh no Governor nothing can go wrong— Well according to the law I've got to get it done as soon as possible after midnight but you're the Governor of the state— How long?— Certainly Governor I can hold it off as long as you want me to— What say?— A girl!—You're going to send her to me?—you have sent her!—she ought to be here by this time?— All right Governor I'll ring you up when it's over Good bye (*He hangs up the receiver mops his forehead with his handkerchief and turns to FATHER DALY in great excitement*) Did you get that? Some girl thinks Dyke's her long lost brother and she's persuaded the old man to let her come out here to night—he wants me to hold up the job until she's had a chance to see him She's due here any minute he says—in his own car—escorted by his own private secretary! Can you beat it?

FATHER DALY (*downcast*) Poor girl!

THE WARDEN (*blots his forehead vigorously*) For a minute there I thought it was going to be a reprieve at the very least Whew!

FATHER DALY So did I
(*The door from the deputy's room is opened and DYKE comes in followed immediately by the JAILER. DYKE halts just inside the door and waits passively to be told what to do next. He has a lean pale face with a high forehead, good eyes and a strong chin. His mouth is ruled in a firm straight line. His wavy hair is prematurely gray. His figure has the elasticity of youth, but he might pass among strangers either as a man of forty or as a man of twenty-five, depending upon the mobility of his features at a given moment. He is dressed in a dark shirt open at the throat, dark trousers without belt or suspenders, and soft slippers. The JAILER receives a nod from the WARDEN and goes out promptly, closing the door behind him.*)

THE WARDEN (*swings half way around in his swivel chair*) Sit down Dyke (*He points to the chair at the right of his desk*)

DYKE Thanks (*He goes directly to the chair and sits down*)

THE WARDEN (*leans back and surveys him thoughtfully. FATHER DALY remains in the background*) Dyke, you've been here under my charge for nearly four months and I want to tell you that from first to last you've behaved yourself like a gentleman.

DYKE (*his manner is vaguely cynical without being in the least impertinent*) Why should I make you any trouble?

THE WARDEN Well, you haven't made me any trouble and I've tried to show what I think about it. I've made you every bit as comfortable as the law would let me.

DYKE You've been very kind to me (*He glances over his shoulder at the chaplain*) And you too, Father.

THE WARDEN I've had you brought in here to stay from now on (*DYKE looks inquiringly at him*) No, you won't have to go back to your cell again. You're to stay right here with Father Daly and me.

DYKE (*carelessly*) All right.

THE WARDEN (*piqued by this cool reception of the distinguished favor*) You don't seem to understand that I'm doing something a long way out of the ordinary for you.

DYKE Oh, yes, I do, but maybe you don't understand why it doesn't give me much of a thrill.

FATHER DALY (*comes forward*) My son, the Warden is only trying to do you one more kindness.

DYKE I know he is, Father, but the Warden isn't taking very much of a gamble. From now on, one place is about the same as another.

THE WARDEN What do you mean?

DYKE (*his voice is very faintly sarcastic*) Why, I mean that I'm just as much a condemned prisoner here as when I was in my cell. That door (*he points to it*) leads right back to my cell. Outside those windows are armed guards every few feet. You yourself can't get through the iron door in that anteroom (*he*

indicates the door to the left) until somebody on the outside unlocks it and I know as well as you do where *that door (he points to the nearer door on the right)* leads to

THE WARDEN (*stiffly*) Would you rather wait in your cell?

DYKE Oh no this is a little pleasant Except—

THE WARDEN Except what?

DYKE In my cell I could smoke

THE WARDEN (*shrugs his shoulders*) What do you want—cigar or cigarette?

DYKE A cigarette if it's all the same (*The WARDEN opens a drawer of his desk takes out a box of cigarettes removes one and hands it to DYKE The WARDEN striking a match lights DYKE's cigarette and then carefully puts out the match*)

DYKE (*smiles faintly*) Thanks You're a good host

THE WARDEN Dyke before it's too late I wish you'd think over what Father Daly and I've said to you so many times

DYKE I've thought of nothing else

THE WARDEN Then—as man to man—and this is your last chance—who are you?

DYKE (*inspects his cigarette*) Who am I? James Dyke—a murderer

THE WARDEN That isn't your real name and we know it

DYKE You're not going to execute a name—you're going to execute a

man What difference does it make whether you call me Dyke or some thing else?

THE WARDEN You had another name once What was it?

DYKE If I had I've forgotten it

FATHER DALY Your mind is made up my son?

DYKE Yes Father it is

THE WARDEN Dyke

DYKE Yes sir?

THE WARDEN Do you see this pile of letters? (*He places his hand over it*)

DYKE Yes sir

THE WARDEN (*fingers them*) Every one of these letters is about the same thing and all put together we've got maybe four thousand of 'em These here are just a few samples

DYKE What about them?

THE WARDEN We've had letters from every State in the Union and every province in Canada We've had fifteen or twenty from England four or five from France two from Australia and one from Russia

DYKE Well?

THE WARDEN (*inclines toward him*) Do you know what every one of those letters says—what four thousand different people are writing to me about?

DYKE No sir

THE WARDEN (*speaks slowly and impressively*) Who are you—and are you the missing son—or brother—or husband—or sweetheart?

DYKE (*flucks his cigarette ashes to the floor*) Have you answered them?

THE WARDEN No I couldn't I want you to

DYKE How's that?

THE WARDEN I want you to tell me who you are (*DYKE shakes his head*) Can't you see you ought to do it?

DYKE No sir, I can't exactly see that Suppose you explain it to me

THE WARDEN (*suddenly*) You're trying to shield somebody aren't you?

DYKE Yes—no I'm not!

THE WARDEN (*glances at FATHER DALY and nods with elation*) Who is it? Your family?

DYKE I said I'm not

THE WARDEN But first you said you were

DYKE That was a slip of the tongue

THE WARDEN (*has grown persuasive*) Dyke just listen to me a minute Don't be narrow look at this thing in a big broad way Suppose you should tell me your real name and I publish it it'll bring an awful lot of sorrow let's say to one family one home and that's your own That's probably what you're thinking about Am I right? You

want to spare your family and I don't blame you On the surface it sure would look like a mighty white thing for you to do But look at it *this way* suppose you came out with the truth flat footed why you might put all that sorrow into one home—your own—but at the same time you'd be putting an immense amount of relief in four thousand—others Don't you get that? Don't you figure you owe something to all these other people?

DYKE Not a thing

FATHER DALY (*has been fidgeting*) My boy the Warden is absolutely right You do owe something to the other people—you owe them peace of mind—and for the sake of all those thousands of poor distressed women who imagine God knows what I beg of you to tell us who you are

DYKE Father I simply can't do it

FATHER DALY Think carefully my boy think very carefully We're not asking out of idle curiosity

DYKE I know that but please don't let's talk about it any more (*To the WARDEN*) You can answer those letters whenever you want to and you can say I'm not the man they're looking for That'll be the truth too Because I haven't any mother—or father—or sister—or wife—or sweetheart That's fair enough isn't it?

FATHER DALY (*sighs wearily*) As you will my son

THE WARDEN Dyke there's one more thing

DYKE Yes?

THE WARDEN Here are the Liberty Bonds (*he takes up the large envelope from his desk*) that belong to you Twenty five hundred dollars in real money

DYKE (*removes the bonds and examines them*) Good looking aren't they?

THE WARDEN (*casually*) What do you want me to do with them?

DYKE Well I can't very well take them with me so under the circumstances I'd like to put them where they'll do the most good

THE WARDEN (*more casually yet*) Who do you want me to send 'em to?

DYKE (*laughs quietly*) Now Warden Holt you didn't think you were going to catch me that way did you?

THE WARDEN (*scowls*) Who'll I send 'em to? I can't keep 'em here and I can't destroy 'em What do you want to do with 'em?

DYKE (*ponders diligently and tosses the envelopes to the desk*) I don't know I'll think of something to do with them I'll tell you in just a minute Is there anything else?

THE WARDEN Not unless you want to make some sort of statement

DYKE No I guess I've said everything I killed a man and I'm not sorry for it—that is I'm not sorry I killed that particular person I—

FATHER DALY (*raises his hand*) Repentance—

DYKE (*raises his own hand in turn*, I've heard that repentance Father is the sick bed of the soul—and mine is very well and flourishing The man deserved to be killed he wasn't fit to live It was my duty to kill him and I did it I'd never struck a man in anger in all my life but when I knew what that fellow had done I knew I had to kill him and I did it deliberately and intentionally—and carefully I knew what I was doing and I haven't any excuse—that is I haven't any excuse that satisfies the law Now I learned pretty early in life that whatever you do in this world you have to pay for in one way or another If you kill a man, the price you have to pay is this (*he makes a gesture which sweeps the entire room*) and that (*he points to the nearer door on the right*) and I'm going to pay it That's all there is to that And an hour from now while my body is lying in there if a couple of angel policemen grab my soul and haul it up before God—

FATHER DALY (*profoundly shocked*) My boy my boy please—

DYKE I beg your pardon Father I don't mean to trample on anything that's sacred to you but what I do mean to say is this If I've got to be judged by God Almighty for the crime of murder I'm not afraid because the other fellow will certainly be there too won't he? And when God hears the whole story and both sides of it which *you* never heard and never will—and they never heard it in the court room either—why then if he's any kind of a God at all I'm willing to take my chances with the other fellow That's how concerned I am about the hereafter And if it'll make you

feel any better Father why I *do* rather think there's going to be a hereafter I read a book once that said a milligram of musk will give out perfume for seven thousand years and a milligram of radium will give out light for *seventy* thousand Why shouldn't a soul—mine for instance—live more than twenty seven? But if there *isn't* any hereafter—if we just die and are dead and that's all—why I'm still not sorry and I'm not afraid because I'm quits with the other fellow—the law is quits with me and it's all balanced on the books And that's all there is to that

(An ATTENDANT enters from the anteroom)

THE WARDEN Well? What is it?

THE ATTENDANT Visitor to see you sir With note from Governor Fuller (He presents it)

THE WARDEN (*barely glances at the envelope*) Oh! A young woman?

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir

THE WARDEN Is Mrs Case there?

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir

THE WARDEN Have the girl searched, and then take her into the anteroom and wait till I call you

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir (*He goes out*)

THE WARDEN Dyke, a young woman has just come to see you—do you want to see her?

DYKE I don't think so What does she want?

THE WARDEN She thinks maybe she's your sister and she's come a thousand miles to find out

DYKE She's wrong I haven't any sister

THE WARDEN (*hesitates*) Will I tell her that or do you want to tell it to her yourself?

DYKE Oh you tell her

THE WARDEN All right (*He starts to rise but resumes his seat as DYKE speaks*)

DYKE Just a second—she's come a thousand miles to see me did you say?

THE WARDEN Yes and she's got special permission from the Governor to talk to you—that is with my O K

DYKE A year ago nobody'd have crossed the street to look at me and now they come a thousand miles!

FATHER DALY This is one of your debts to humanity my boy It wouldn't take you two minutes to see her and if you don't after she's made that long journey in hope and dread and suffering—

DYKE Where can I talk with her—here?

THE WARDEN Yes

DYKE Alone? (*The WARDEN is doubtful*) Why, you don't need to be afraid I haven't the faintest idea who the girl is, but if she happens to be some poor misguided sentimental fool, with a gun or a pocket full of cyanide of potassium, she's

wasting her time I wouldn't cheat the sovereign state of Connecticut for anything in the world—not even to please a young lady

THE WARDEN Dyke there's some thing about you that gets every body

DYKE How about the jury?

THE WARDEN You've got a sort of way with you—

DYKE How about that spread eagle district attorney?

THE WARDEN I'm going to let you talk with that girl in here—alone

DYKE Thanks

THE WARDEN It's a sort of thing that's never been done before but if I put you on your honor—

DYKE (*cynically*) My honor! Thank you so much

FATHER DALY Warden, are you sure it's wise?

DYKE Father I'm disappointed in you Do you imagine I'd do any thing that could reflect on Warden Holt—or you—or the young lady—or me?

THE WARDEN Father, will you take Dyke into the deputy's room? I want to speak to the young lady first

FATHER DALY Certainly Come my boy (FATHER DALY and DYKE start toward the Deputy's room)

THE WARDEN I'll call you in just a couple of minutes

DYKE We promise not to run away (*They go out together*)

THE WARDEN (*calls*) Wilson!
(*The ATTENDANT enters from the left*)

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir

THE WARDEN Is the girl there?

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir

THE WARDEN Frisked?

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir

THE WARDEN Everything all right?

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir

THE WARDEN (*throws away his cigar*) Bring her in

THE ATTENDANT Yes, sir (*He speaks through the door at the left*)
Step this way Miss This here's the Warden

(*A young girl appears on the threshold and casts about in mingled curiosity and apprehension She is fresh and wholesome and rather pretty but her manner betrays a certain spiritual aloofness from the ultra-modern world—a certain delicate reticence of the flesh—which immediately separates her from the metropolitan class In deed she is dressed far too simply for a metropolitan girl of her age she wears a blue tailored suit with deep white cuffs and a starched white sailor collar, and a small blue hat which fits snugly over her fluffy hair Her costume is not quite conservative enough to be literally old fashioned but it hints at the taste and repression of an old-fashioned home*)

She is neither timid nor aggressive she is self unconscious She looks at the WARDEN squarely but not in boldness and yet not in feminine appeal she has rather the fearlessness of a girl who has lost none of her illusions about men in general Her expression is essentially serious it conveys however the idea that her seriousness is due to her present mission and that ordinarily she takes an active joy in the mere pleasure of existence)

THE WARDEN (*he had expected a very different type of visitor so that he is somewhat taken aback*) All right Wilson

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir (*He goes out*)

THE WARDEN (*with grave deference half rises*) Will you sit down?

THE GIRL Why—thank you very much (*She sits in the chair beside the desk and regards him trustfully*)

THE WARDEN (*he is palpably affected by her youth and innocence and he is not quite sure how best to proceed but eventually he makes an awkward beginning*) You've had an interview with the Governor I understand?

THE GIRL Yes sir I was with him almost an hour

THE WARDEN And you want to see Dyke, do you?

THE GIRL Yes sir I *hope* I'm not—too late

THE WARDEN No you're not too late (*He is appraising her carefully*) But I want to ask you a few

questions beforehand (*Her reaction of uncertainty induces him to soften his tone*) There isn't anything to get upset about I just want to make it easier for you not harder Where do you live?

THE GIRL In Ohio

THE WARDEN (*very kindly*) What place?

THE GIRL In Pennington sir It's a little town not far from Columbus

THE WARDEN And you live out there with your father and mother?

THE GIRL No sir—just my mother and I My father died when I was a little baby

THE WARDEN Why didn't your mother come here herself instead of sending you?

THE GIRL She couldn't She's sick

THE WARDEN I see Have you any brothers or sisters?

THE GIRL (*slightly more at ease*) Just one brother sir—this one He and I were the only children We were very fond of each other

THE WARDEN He was considerably older than you?

THE GIRL Oh yes He's ten years older

THE WARDEN Why did he leave home?

THE GIRL I don't really know sir, except he just wanted to be in the city Pennington's pretty small!

THE WARDEN How long is it since you've seen him? ably know him whether he'd changed or not

THE GIRL It's eight years

THE GIRL Yes sir But I'll do the best I can

THE WARDEN (*his voice is almost paternal*) As long as that? Hm! And how old are you now?

THE WARDEN When was the last time you heard from him and where was he and what was he doing?

THE GIRL I'm almost eighteen

THE WARDEN (*repeats slowly*) Almost eighteen Hm! And are you sure after all this time you'd recognize your brother if you saw him?

THE GIRL Why it's about five or six years since we had a letter from Joe He was in Seattle Washington

THE WARDEN What doing?

THE GIRL Well— (*She looks down as if embarrassed to make the admission*) Of course I think so but maybe I couldn't You see I was only a little girl when he went away—he wasn't a bad boy sir I don't think he could ever be really bad—but if this is my brother why he's been in a great deal of trouble and you know that trouble makes people look different

THE GIRL I don't remember At home though he worked in the stationery store He liked books

THE WARDEN (*suspiciously*) Why do you suppose he didn't write home?

THE GIRL I—couldn't say He was just—thoughtless

THE WARDEN Yes it does But what makes you think this man Dyke may be your brother—and why didn't you think of it sooner? The case has been in the papers for the last six months

THE WARDEN Wasn't in trouble of any kind?

THE GIRL Oh no! Never That is—unless he's—here now

THE GIRL Why it wasn't until last Tuesday that Mother saw a piece in the *Journal*—that's the Columbus paper—that he'd written all about himself and there was one little part of it that sounded so like Joe—like the funny way he used to say things—and then there was a picture that looked the least little *but* like him—well Mother just wanted me to come East and find out for sure

THE WARDEN (*deliberates*) How are you going to tell him?

THE GIRL I don't know what you mean

THE WARDEN It's too bad she couldn't come herself She'd prob-

THE WARDEN Why you say maybe you wouldn't know him even if you saw him—and I'll guarantee this man Dyke won't help you out very much How do you think you're going to tell? Suppose he don't want to be recognized by you or anybody else? Suppose he's so ashamed of himself he—

THE GIRL I d thought of that I m just going to talk to him—ask him questions—about things he and I used to do together—I ll watch his face and if he s my brother I m sure I can tell

THE WARDEN (*with tolerant doubt*) What did you and your brother ever used to do that would help you out now?

THE GIRL He used to play games with me when I was a little girl and tell me stories—that s what I m counting on mostly—the stories

THE WARDEN I m afraid—

THE GIRL Especially Shakespeare stories

THE WARDEN Shakespeare!

THE GIRL Why yes He used to get the plots of the plays—all the Shakespeare plays—out of a book by a man named Lamb and then he d tell me the stories in his own words It was wonderful!

THE WARDEN I m certainly afraid he—

THE GIRL But best of all he d learn some of the speeches from the plays themselves He liked to do it—he was sure he was going to be an actor or something—he was in all the high school plays always And then he d teach some of the speeches to me and we d say them to each other And one thing—every night he d sit side of my bed, and when I got sleepy there were two speeches we d always say to each other like good night—two speeches out of *Romeo and Juliet* and then I d go to sleep I can see it all. (*The WAR-*

DEN *shakes his head*) Why do you do that?

THE WARDEN This boy isn t your brother

THE GIRL Do you think he isn t?

THE WARDEN I *know* he isn t

THE GIRL How do you?

THE WARDEN This boy never heard of Shakespeare—much less learned him (*He presses a button on his desk*) Oh I ll let you see him for yourself only you might as well be prepared (*The ATTENDANT enters from the anteroom*) Tell Dyke and Father Daly to come in here—they re in the deputy s room

THE ATTENDANT Yes sir (*He crosses behind the WARDEN and goes off to the right*)

THE WARDEN If he turns out to be your brother—which he won t—you can have say an hour with him If he don t you ll oblige me by cutting it as short as you can

THE GIRL You see I ve got to tell Mother something perfectly definite She s worried so long about him and—*and now* the suspense is perfectly terrible for her

THE WARDEN I can understand that You re a plucky girl

THE GIRL Of course it would be awful for us if this is Joe but even that would be better for Mother than just to stay awake nights, and wonder and wonder and never *know* what became of him (*The ATTENDANT opens the door of the Deputy's room and when DYKE*

and FATHER DALY have come in he crosses again behind the WARDEN and is going out at the left when the WARDEN signs to him and he stops)

THE WARDEN (gets to his feet) Dyke this is the young lady that's come all the way from Pennington Ohio to see you

DYKE (who has been talking in an undertone to FATHER DALY raises his head quickly) Yes sir?

THE WARDEN I've decided you can talk with her here—alone
(THE GIRL has risen breathless and stands fixed DYKE inspects her coldly from head to foot)

DYKE Thank you It won't take long

THE WARDEN (has been scanning the girl's expression now as he sees that she has neither recognized DYKE nor failed to recognize him, he makes a little grimace in confirmation of his own judgment) Father Daly and I'll stay in the deputy's office We'll leave the door open Wilson you stand in the anteroom with the door open

DYKE (bitterly) My honor!

THE WARDEN What say?

DYKE I didn't say anything

THE WARDEN (to the GIRL) Will you please remember what I told you about the time?

THE GIRL Oh yes sir

THE WARDEN Come, Father
(They go off into the Deputy's room, and the ATTENDANT, at a nod

from the WARDEN goes off at the left)

(DYKE and the GIRL are now facing each other DYKE is well poised and insouciant and gives the impression of complete indifference to the moment The GIRL on the other hand is deeply agitated and her agitation is gradually increased by DYKE's own attitude)

THE GIRL (after several efforts to speak) Mother sent me to see you

DYKE (politely callous) Yes?

THE GIRL (compelled to drop her eyes) You see, we haven't seen or heard of my brother Joe for ever so long and mother thought—after what we read in the papers—

DYKE That I might be your brother Joe?

THE GIRL (obviously relieved) Yes that's it

DYKE Well, you can easily see that I'm not your brother can't you?

THE GIRL (stares at him again) I'm not sure You look a little like him just as the picture in the paper did but then again it's so long—
(she shakes her head dubiously)
and I'd thought of Joe so differently—

DYKE (his manner is somewhat indulgent as though to a child) As a matter of fact I couldn't be your brother or anybody else's brother, because I never had a sister So that rather settles it

THE GIRL Honestly?

DYKE Honestly

THE GIRL (*unconvinced becomes more appealing*) What's your real name?

DYKE Dyke—James Dyke

THE GIRL That's sure enough your name?

DYKE Sure enough You don't think I'd tell a lie at this stage of the game do you?

THE GIRL (*musings*) No I don't believe you would Where do you come from—I mean where were you born?

DYKE In Canada but I've lived all over

THE GIRL Didn't you ever live in Ohio?

DYKE No Never

THE GIRL What kind of work did you do—what was your business?

DYKE Oh I'm sort of Jack of all trades I've been everything a man could be—except a success

THE GIRL Do you like books?

DYKE Books?

THE GIRL Yes—books to read

DYKE I don't read when there's anything better to do I've read a lot here

THE GIRL Did you ever sell books—for a living I mean?

DYKE Oh no

THE GIRL (*growing confused*) I hope you don't mind my asking so many questions But I—

DYKE No—go ahead if it'll relieve your mind any

THE GIRL You went to school some where of course—high school?

DYKE No I never got that far

THE GIRL Did you ever want to be an actor? Or *were* you ever?

DYKE No just a convict

THE GIRL (*helplessly*) Do you know any poetry?

DYKE Not to speak of

THE GIRL (*delays a moment and then watching him very earnestly she recites just above her breath*)

*Thou knowst the mask of night is
on my face
Else would a maiden blush be
paint my cheek
For that which—*

(*Realizing that DYKE's expression is one of utter vacuity she falters and breaks off the quotation but she continues to watch him unwaveringly*) Don't you know what that is?

DYKE No but to tell the truth it sounds sort of silly to me Doesn't it to you?

THE GIRL (*her intonation has become slightly forlorn but she gathers courage and puts him to one more test*)

*Good night good night parting
is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good night till it
be morrow*

DYKE (*his mouth twitches in amusement*) Eh?

THE GIRL What comes next?

DYKE Good Lord I don't know

THE GIRL (*gazes intently almost imploringly at him as though she is making a struggle to read his mind Then she relaxes and holds out her hand*) Good bye You—you're not Joe are you? I—had to come and find out though I hope I've not made you too unhappy

DYKE (*ignores her hand*) You're not going now?

THE GIRL (*spurtless*) Yes I promised the—is he the Warden? that man in there?—I said I'd go right away if you weren't my brother And you aren't so—

DYKE You're going back to your mother?

THE GIRL Yes

DYKE I'm surprised that she sent a girl like you on a sorry errand like this instead of—

THE GIRL She's very sick

DYKE Oh that's too bad

THE GIRL (*twisting her handkerchief*) No she's not well at all And most of it's from worrying about Joe

DYKE Still when you tell her that her son isn't a murderer—at least that he isn't *this* one—that'll comfort her a good deal won't it?

THE GIRL (*reluctantly*) Yes, I think maybe it will only—

DYKE Only what?

THE GIRL I don't think Mother'll ever be *really* well again until she finds out for certain where Joe is and what's become of him

DYKE (*shakes his head compassionately*) Mothers ought not to be treated like that I wish I'd treated *mine* better By the way you didn't tell me what your name is

THE GIRL Josephine Paris

DYKE (*is suddenly attentive*) Paris? That's an unusual name I've heard it somewhere too

THE GIRL Just like the name of the city—in France

DYKE (*knitting his brows*) And your brother's name was Joseph?

THE GIRL Yes—they used to call us Joe and Josie—that's funny isn't it?

DYKE (*thoughtfully*) No I don't think it's so very funny I rather like it (*He passes his hand over his forehead as if trying to coerce his memory*)

THE GIRL What's the matter?

DYKE (*frowning*) I was thinking of something—now what on earth was that boy's name! Wait a minute, don't tell me—wait a minute—I've got it! (*He punctuates his triumph with one fist in the palm of the other hand*) Joseph Anthony Paris!

THE GIRL (*amazed*) Why that's his name! That's Joe! How did you ever—

DYKE (*his manner is very forcible and convincing*) Wait! Now listen carefully to what I say, and don't

interrupt me because we've only got a minute and I want you to get this all straight so you can tell your mother. When the war came along I enlisted and I was overseas for four years—with the Canadians. Early one morning we'd staged a big trench raid and there was an officer who'd been wounded coming back and was lying out there in a shell hole under fire. The Jerries were getting ready for a raid of their own so they were putting down a box barrage with light guns and howitzers and a few heavies. This officer was lying right in the middle of it. Well, all of a sudden a young fellow dashed out of a trench not far from where I was and went for that officer. He had to go through a curtain of shells and more than that they opened on him with rifles and machine guns. The chances were just about a million to one against him and he must have known it but he went out just the same. He got the officer in his arms and started back but he'd only gone a few yards when a five point nine landed right on top of the two of them. Afterward we got what was left—the identification tag was still there—and that was the name—Joseph Anthony Paris!

THE GIRL (*carries both hands to her breast*) Oh!

DYKE If that was your brother's name then you can tell your mother that he died like a brave man and a soldier three years ago in France.

THE GIRL Joe—my brother Joe—is dead?

DYKE On the field of battle. It was one of the wonderful heroic things that went almost unnoticed, as so

many of them did. If an officer had seen it there'd have been a decoration for your mother to keep and remember him by.

THE GIRL And you were there—and saw it?

DYKE I was there and saw it. It was three years ago. That's why you and your mother haven't heard from him. And if you don't believe what I've said, why you just write up to Ottawa and get the official record. Of course (*he shrugs his shoulders contemptuously*) those records are in terribly poor shape but at least they can tell you what battalion he fought with when he went overseas. Only you mustn't be surprised no matter whether they say he was killed in action or died of wounds or is missing or even went through the whole war with his outfit and was honorably discharged. They really don't know what happened to half the men. But I've told you the truth. And it certainly ought to make your mother happy when she knows that her boy died as a soldier and not as a criminal.

THE GIRL (*is transfigured*) Yes, yes it will!

DYKE And does it make you happy too?

THE GIRL (*nods repeatedly*) Yes. So happy—after what we were both afraid of—I can't even cry—yet (*She brushes her eyes with her handkerchief*) I can hardly wait to take it to her.

DYKE (*struck by a sudden inspiration*) I want to give you something else to take to her (*He picks up from the desk the envelope contain-*

ing the Liberty Bonds and seals it) I want you to give this to your mother from me Tell her it's from a man who was at Vimy Ridge and saw your brother die so it's a sort of memorial for him *(He touches her arm as she absently begins to tear open the envelope)* No don't you open it—let her do it

THE GIRL What is it? Can't I know?

DYKE Never mind now but give it to her It's all I've got in the world and it's too late now for me to do anything else with it And have your mother buy a little gold star to wear for her son—and you get one too and wear it—here—*(He touches his heart)* Will you?

THE GIRL Yes—I will And yet somehow I'll almost feel that I'm wearing it for you too

DYKE *(shakes his head soberly)* Oh, no! You mustn't ever do that I'm not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with a boy like your brother and now I'm afraid it is time for you to go I'm sorry but—you'd better I'm glad you came before it was too late though

THE GIRL *(gives him her hand)* Good bye and thank you You've done more for me—and Mother—than I could possibly tell you And—and I'm so sorry for you—so *truly* sorry—I wish I could only do something to make you a tiny bit happier too Is there anything I could do?

DYKE *(stares at her and by degrees he becomes wistful)* Why—yes there is Only I—*(He leaves the sentence uncompleted)*

THE GIRL What is it?

DYKE *(looks away)* I can't tell you I never should have let myself think of it

THE GIRL Please tell me I want you to For—for Joe's sake tell me what I can do

DYKE *(his voice is low and desolate)* Well—in all the months I've been in this hideous place you're the first girl I've seen I didn't ever expect to see one again I'd forgotten how much like angels women look I've been terribly lonesome tonight especially and if you really do want to do something for me—for your brother's sake—you see you're going to leave me in just a minute and—and I haven't any sister of my own or anybody else to say good bye to me—so if you could—*really* say good bye—*(She gazes at him for a moment understands flushes and then slowly moves into his outstretched arms He holds her close to him, touches his lips to her forehead twice and releases her)*

DYKE *(thickly)* Good-bye my dear

THE GIRL Good night *(She endeavors to smile but her voice catches in her throat)* Good bye

DYKE *(impulsively)* What is it?

THE GIRL *(shakes her head)* N nothing

DYKE Nothing?

THE GIRL *(clutches her handkerchief tight in her palm)* I was thinking—I was thinking what I used to say to my brother—for good night *(She very nearly breaks down)* If I only could have—have said it to him just once more—for good bye

DYKE What was it?

THE GIRL I—I told it to you once
and you said it was silly

DYKE (softly) Say it again

THE GIRL (she cannot quite control
her voice)

Good night good night parting
is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good night till it
be morrow

(She goes uncertainly toward the
anteroom hesitates almost turns
back and then with a choking sob
she hurries through the door and
closes it behind her For several sec-
onds DYKE stands rigidly intent upon
that door until at length without
changing his attitude or his expres-
sion he speaks very tenderly and
reminiscently)

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes,
peace in thy breast
Would I were sleep and peace so
sweet to rest

(The WARDEN and FATHER DALY
come in quietly from the Deputy's
room and as they behold DYKE how
rapt and unconscious of them he is
they look at each other question-
ingly The WARDEN glances at the clock
and makes as though to interrupt
DYKE'S solitary reflections but
FATHER DALY quietly restrains him
The CHAPLAIN sits down in one of
the chairs at the back wall the WAR-
DEN crosses on tip toe and sits at his
desk, he is excessively nervous and
he continually refers to the clock
DYKE turns as though unwillingly,
from the door there are depths in
his eyes and his thoughts are evi-
dently far away He sits in the chair

to the right of the WARDEN'S desk
and leans outward his right hand
on his knee He puts his left hand to
his throat as though to protect it
from a sudden pain He gazes
straight ahead into the unknown and
speaks in reverie)

Of all the wonders that I yet have
heard

It seems to me most strange that
men should fear
Seeing that death a necessary
end

Will come when it will come

(He stops and muses for a time
while the WARDEN glances perplex-
edly at FATHER DALY to discover if
the PRIEST can interpret what DYKE
is saying FATHER DALY shakes his
head Abruptly DYKE'S face is il-
luminated by a new and welcome rec-
ollection and again he speaks
while the WARDEN tries in vain to
comprehend him)

Cowards die many times before
their death

The valiant never taste of death
but once

(He stops again and shudders a
trifle his head droops and he re-
peats barely above a whisper)

The valiant never taste of death
but once

(The nearer door on the right is
opened noiselessly and the JAILER
in obedience to his instructions,
steps just inside the room and stands
there mute FATHER DALY and the
WARDEN glance at the JAILER and
with significance at each other and
both rise, tardily The WARDEN'S
hand as it rests on his desk is seen
to tremble There is a moment of

dead silence present^{ly} DYKE lifts his head and catches sight of the motionless ATTENDANT at the open door With a quick intake of his breath he starts half out of his seat and stares fascinated he sinks back slowly and turns his head to gaze first at FATHER DALY and then at the WARDEN The WARDEN averts his eyes but FATHER DALY'S expression is of supreme pity and encouragement Involuntarily DYKE'S hand again goes creeping upward toward his throat but he arrests it He grasps the arms of his chair and braces himself he rises then and stands very erect in almost the position of a soldier at attention)

THE WARDEN (swallows hard)
Dyke!

FATHER DALY (brushes past the WARDEN his right hand lifted as though in benediction) My son!

DYKE (regards them fixedly his voice is low and steady) All right, let's go (He faces about and with his head held proud and high and his shoulders squared to the world he moves slowly toward the open door FATHER DALY with the light of his calling in his eyes steps in line just ahead of DYKE The WARDEN

his mouth set hard falls in behind When they have all gone forward a pace or two FATHER DALY begins to speak and DYKE to reply FATHER DALY'S voice is strong and sweet and DYKE speaks just after him not mechanically but in brave and unflinching response)

FATHER DALY I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills—

DYKE The valiant never taste of death but once

FATHER DALY From whence cometh my help

DYKE "The valiant never taste of death but once

FATHER DALY (has almost reached the door his voice rises a semi-tone and gains in emotion) My help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and earth

DYKE The valiant never taste of death—but once

(When the WARDEN whose hands are tightly clenched has passed the threshold the JAILER follows and closes the door behind him There is a very brief pause and then)

CURTAIN

In the Zone

BY EUGENE O'NEILL

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CHARACTERS

SMITTY
DAVIS
SWANSON
SCOTTY
IVAN
PAUL
JACK
DRISCOLL
COCKY

*Seamen on the British Tramp
Steamer Glencairn*

IN THE ZONE

SCENE—The seamen's forecabin On the right above the bunks three or four portholes covered with black cloth can be seen On the floor near the doorway is a pail with a tin dipper A lantern in the middle of the floor turned down very low throws a dim light around the place Five men SCOTTY IVAN SWANSON SMITTY and PAUL are in their bunks apparently asleep It is about ten minutes of twelve on a night in the fall of the year 1915

SMITTY turns slowly in his bunk and leaning out over the side looks from one to another of the men as if to assure himself that they are asleep Then he climbs carefully out of his bunk and stands in the middle of the forecabin fully dressed but in his stocking feet glancing around him suspiciously Reassured he leans down and cautiously pulls out a suitcase from under the bunks in front of him

Just at this moment DAVIS appears in the doorway carrying a large steaming coffee pot in his hand He stops short when he sees SMITTY A puzzled expression comes over his face followed by one of suspicion and he retreats farther back in the alleyway where he can watch SMITTY without being seen

All the latter's movements indicate a fear of discovery He takes out a small bunch of keys and unlocks the suitcase making a slight noise as he does so SCOTTY wakes up and peers at him over the side of the bunk SMITTY opens the suitcase and takes out a small black tin box carefully places this under his mattress shoves the suitcase back under the bunk, climbs into his bunk again closes his eyes and begins to snore loudly

DAVIS enters the forecabin places the coffee pot beside the lantern and goes from one to the other of the sleepers and shakes them vigorously saying to each in a low voice Near eight bells Scotty Arise and shine Swanson Eight bells Ivan SMITTY yawns loudly with a great pretense of having been dead asleep All of the rest of the men tumble out of their bunks stretching and gaping and commence to pull on their shoes They go one by one to the cupboard near the open door take out their cups and spoons and sit down together on the benches The coffee-pot is passed around They munch their biscuits and sip their coffee in dull silence

DAVIS (suddenly jumping to his feet—nervously) Where's that air coming from? (All are startled and look at him wonderingly)

SWANSON (a squat surly faced Swede—grumpily) What air? I don't feel nothing

DAVIS (excitedly) I kin feel it—a

draft (He stands on the bench and looks around—suddenly exploding) Damn fool square head! (He leans over the upper bunk in which PAUL is sleeping and slams the porthole shut) I got a good notion to report him Serve him bloody well right! What's the use o' blindin' the ports when that thick head goes an' leaves 'em open?

SWANSON (*yawning—too sleepy to be aroused by anything—carelessly*) Dey don't see what little light go out yust one port

SCOTTY (*protestingly*) Dinna be a loon Swanson! Dye no ken the dangerr o showin a licht wi a pack o submarrines lyn aboot?

IVAN (*shaking his shaggy ox like head in an emphatic affirmative*) Dot's right Scotty I don't like blow up no by devil!

SMITTY (*his manner slightly contemptuous*) I don't think there's much danger of meeting any of their submaines not until we get into the war zone at any rate

DAVIS (*he and SCOTTY look at SMITTY suspiciously—harshly*) You don't eh? (*He lowers his voice and speaks slowly*) Well we're in the war zone right this minit if you wants to know
(*The effect of this speech is instantaneous All sit bolt upright on their benches and stare at DAVIS*)

SMITTY How do you know Davis?

DAVIS (*angrily*) Cos Drisc heard the First send the Third below to wake the skipper when we fetched the zone—bout five bells it was Now whata y got to say?

SMITTY (*conciliatingly*) Oh I wasn't doubting your word, Davis but you know they're not pasting up bulletins to let the crew know when the zone is reached—especially on ammunition ships like this

IVAN (*decidedly*) I don't like dees voyage Next time I ship on wind jammer Boston to River Plate load with wood only so it float, by golly!

SWANSON (*fretfully*) I hope British navy blow em to hell those sub marines py damn!

SCOTTY (*looking at SMITTY who is staring at the doorway in a dream his chin on his hands Meaningly*) It is no the submarrines only we've to fear I'm thinkin

DAVIS (*assenting eagerly*) That's no lie Scotty

SWANSON You mean the mines?

SCOTTY I wasna thinkin o mines either

DAVIS There's many a good ship blown up and at the bottom of the sea what never hit no mine or torpedo

SCOTTY Did ye never read of the German spies and the dirty work they're doin all the war? (*He and DAVIS both glance at SMITTY who is deep in thought and is not listening to the conversation*)

DAVIS An the clever way they fool you!

SWANSON Sure I read it in paper many time

DAVIS Well—(*He is about to speak but hesitates and finishes lamely*) you got to watch out that's all I says

IVAN (*drinking the last of his coffee and slamming his fist on the bench explosively*) I tell you dis rotten coffee give me belly ache yes!
(*They all look at him in amused disgust*)

SCOTTY (*sardonically*) Dinna fret about it, Ivan If we blow up ye'll

no be mindin' the pain in your middle

(JACK enters He is a young American with a tough good natured face He wears dungarees and a heavy jersey)

JACK Eight bells fellers

IVAN (stupidly) I don't hear bell ring

JACK No and yuh won't hear any ring yuh boob— (Lowering his voice unconsciously) Now we're in the war zone

SWANSON (anxiously) Is the boats all ready?

JACK Sure we can lower 'em in a second

DAVIS A lot o' good the boats'll do with us loaded deep with all kinds o' dynamite and stuff the like o' that! If a torpedo hits this hooker we'll all be in hell before you could wink your eye

JACK They ain't goin' to hit us, see? That's my dope Whose wheel is it?

IVAN (sullenly) My wheel (He lumbers out)

JACK And whose lookout?

SWANSON Mine I tink (He follows IVAN)

JACK (scornfully) A hell of a lot of use keepin' a lookout! We couldn't run away or fight if we wanted to (To SCOTTY and SMITTY) Better look up the bosun or the Fourth you two, and let 'em see you're awake (SCOTTY goes to the doorway and turns to wait for

SMITTY who is still in the same position head on hands seemingly unconscious of everything JACK slaps him roughly on the shoulder and he comes to with a start) Aft and report, Dukel! What's the matter with yuh—in a dope dream? (SMITTY goes out after SCOTTY without answering JACK looks after him with a frown) He's a queer guy I can't figger him out

DAVIS Nor no one else (Lowering his voice—meaningly) An' he's liable to turn out queerer than any of us think if we ain't careful

JACK (suspiciously) What'd yuh mean? (They are interrupted by the entrance of DRISCOLL and COCKY)

COCKY (protestingly) Blimey if I don't fink I'll put in this ere watch ah'tside on deck (He and DRISCOLL go over and get their cups) I don't want to be caught in this ole if they it's us (He pours out coffee)

DRISCOLL (pouring his) Divil a bit ut wud matther where ye arre Yed be blown to smithereens before ye cud say your name (He sits down over turning as he does so the untouched cup of coffee which SMITTY had forgotten and left on the bench They all jump nervously as the tin cup hits the floor with a bang DRISCOLL flies into an unreasonable rage) Who's the dirty scut left this cup where a man ud sit on ut?

DAVIS It's Smitty's

DRISCOLL (kicking the cup across the forecabin) Does he think he's too much av a bloody gentleman to put his own away loike the rist av us? If he does I'm the bye'll beat that noshun out av his head

COCKY Be the aurs e puts on you d think e was the Prince of Wales Wots e dom on a ship I arks yer? 'E am't now good as a sailor is e? —dawdlin abaht on deck like a chicken wiv is ead cut orfl

JACK (*good naturedly*) Aw the Duke's all right S posin he did fer get his cup—what's the difl (*He picks up the cup and puts it away—with a grin*) This war zone stuff's got yer goat Drisc—and yours too Cocky—and I am't cheerin much fur it myself neither

COCKY (*with a sigh*) Blimey it am't no bleedin joke yer first trip to know as ther's a ship full of shells lible to go orf in under your bloomin feet, as you might say if we gets it be a torpedo or mine (*With sudden savagery*) Calls they selves uman bein's too! Blarsted Uns!

DRISCOLL (*gloomily*) Tis me last trip in the bloody zone God help me The divil take their twenty foive percent bonus—and be drowned like a rat in a trap in the bargan maybe

DAVIS Wouldn't be so bad if she wasn't carryin ammunition Them's the kind the subs is layin for

DRISCOLL (*irritably*) Fur the love av hivin don't be talkin about ut I'm sick wid thinkin and jumpin at ivry bit av a noise (*There is a pause during which they all stare gloomily at the floor*)

JACK Hey Davis what was you sayin about Smitty when they come in?

DAVIS (*with a great air of mystery*) I'll tell you in a minit I want to

wait an see if hes comm back (*Impressively*) You won't be callin him all right when you hears what I seen with my own eyes (*He adds with an air of satisfaction*) An you won't be feelin no safer neither (*They all look at him with puzzled glances full of a vague apprehension*)

DRISCOLL God blarst ut! (*He fills his pipe and lights it*) The others with an air of remembering some thing they had forgotten do the same SCOTTY enters)

SCOTTY (*in awed tones*) Mon but it's clear outside the nict! Like day

DAVIS (*in low tones*) Where's Smit ty Scotty?

SCOTTY Out on the hatch starin at the moon like a mon half daft

DAVIS Kin you see him from the doorway?

SCOTTY (*goes to doorway and carefully peeks out*) Aye hes still there

DAVIS Keep your eyes on him for a moment I've got something I wants to tell the boys and I don't want him walkin in the middle of it Give a shout if he starts this way

SCOTTY (*with suppressed excitement*) Aye I'll watch him And I've somethin myself to tell aboot his Lordship

DRISCOLL (*impatiently*) Out wid ut! You're talkin more than a pair av auld women wud be standin in the road, and gittin no further along

DAVIS Listen! You member when I went to get the coffee Jack?

JACK Sure I do

DAVIS Well I brings it down here same as usual and got as far as the door there when I sees him

JACK Smitty?

DAVIS Yes Smitty! He was standin in the middle of the fo c s tle there (*pointing*) lookin aro und sneakin-like at Ivan and Swanson and the rest s if he wants to make certain they're asleep (*He pauses significantly looking from one to the other of his listeners* SCOTTY is nervously dividing his attention between SMITTY on the hatch outside and DAVIS story fairly bursting to break in with his own revelations)

JACK (*impatiently*) What of it?

DAVIS Listen! He was standin right there— (*Pointing again*) In his stockin feet—no shoes on mind, so he wouldn't make no noise!

JACK (*spitting disgustedly*) Aw!

DAVIS (*not heeding the interruption*) I seen right away somethin on the queer was up so I slides back into the alleyway where I kin see him but he can't see me After he makes sure they're all asleep he goes in under the bunks there—bein careful not to raise a noise mind!—an takes out his bag there (*By this time every one JACK included is listening breathlessly to his story*) Then he fishes in his pocket an takes out a bunch o keys an kneels down beside the bag an opens it

SCOTTY (*unable to keep silent longer*) Mon didn't I see him do that same thing wi these two eyes Twas just that moment I woke and spied him

DAVIS (*surprised and a bit nettled to have to share his story with any one*) Oh you seen him too eh? (*To the others*) Then Scotty kin tell you if I'm lym or not.

DRISCOLL An what did he do whin he d the bag opened?

DAVIS He bends down and reaches out his hand sort o scared like like it was somethin dang'rous he was after an feels round in under his duds—hidden in under his duds an wrapped up in em it was—an he brings out a black iron box!

COCKY (*looking around him with a frightened glance*) Gawd blimey! (*The others likewise betray their uneasiness shuffling their feet nervously*)

DAVIS Ain't that right Scotty?

SCOTTY Right as rain I'm tellin ye!

DAVIS (*to the others with an air of satisfaction*) There you are! (*Lowering his voice*) An then what'd you suppose he did? Sneaks to his bunk an' slips the black box in under his mattress—in under his mattress, mind!—

JACK And it's there now?

DAVIS Course it is!
(JACK starts toward SMITTY's bunk
DRISCOLL grabs him by the arm)

DRISCOLL Don't be touchin ut, Jack!

JACK Yuh needn't worry I ain't goin' to touch it (*He pulls up SMITTY'S mattress and looks down. The others stare at him holding their breaths. He turns to them trying hard to assume a careless tone*) It's there aw right

COCKY (*miserably upset*) I'm goin' ter op it aht on deck (*He gets up but DRISCOLL pulls him down again. COCKY protests*) It fair guvs me the trembles sittin' still in ere

DRISCOLL (*scornfully*) Are ye frightened ye toad? 'Tis a hell av a thing fur grown men to be shiverin' loike childer at a bit av a black box (*Scratching his head in uneasy perplexity*) Still, ut's damn queer the looks av ut.

DAVIS (*sarcastically*) A bit of a black box eh? How big'd you think them— (*he hesitates*) things has to be—big as this fo'c's'le?

JACK (*in a voice meant to be reassuring*) Aw hell! I'll bet it ain't nothin' but some com' he's saved he's got locked up in there

DAVIS (*scornfully*) That's likely ain't it? Then why does he act so suspicious? He's been on ship near two year ain't he? He knows damn well there ain't no theifs in this fo'c's'le don't he? An you know s well s I do he didn't have no money when he came on board an' he ain't saved none since. Don't you? (*JACK doesn't answer*) Listen! D you know what he done after he put that thing in under his mattress?—an Scotty'll tell you if I ain't speakin' truth. He looks round to see if any one's woke up—

SCOTTY I clapped my eyes shut when he turned round

DAVIS An then he crawls into his bunk an' shuts his eyes an' starts in snorin' pretendin' he was asleep mind!

SCOTTY Aye I could hear him

DAVIS An when I goes to call him I don't even shake him I just says Eight bells Smitty in a most a whisper like an up he gets yawnin' an' stretchin' fit to kill hussell s if he's been dead asleep

COCKY Gawd blimey!

DRISCOLL (*shaking his head*) Ut looks bad divil a doubt av ut

DAVIS (*excitedly*) An now I come to think of it there's the porthole. How'd it come to git open tell me that? I know'd well Paul never opened it. Ain't he grumblin' about bein' cold all the time?

SCOTTY The mon that opened it meant no good to this ship whoever he was

JACK (*sourly*) What porthole? What're yuh talkin' about?

DAVIS (*pointing over PAUL'S bunk*) There It was open when I come in I felt the cold air on my neck an' shut it. It would a been clears a lighthouse to any sub that was watchin'—an we s posed to have all the ports blundered! Who'd do a dirty trick like that? It wasn't none of us nor Scotty here nor Swanson nor Ivan. Who would it be then?

COCKY (*angrily*) Must a been is bloody Lordship

DAVIS For all s we know he might a been signallin' with it. They does it

like that by winkin a light Ain't you read how they gets caught dom it in London an on the coast?

DRISCOLL (*slapping his thigh—angrily*) Devil take me if I don't think ye have the truth av ut Davis

COCKY (*firmly convinced now*) An wots e dom aht alone on the atch—keepin issel'f clear of us like e was afraid?

COCKY (*scornfully*) Lettin on be is silly airs and all es the son of a blarsted earl or somethink!

DRISCOLL Kape your eye on him Scotty

DAVIS An the name he calls hisself—Smith! I d risk a quid of my next pay day that his real name is Schmidt if the truth was known

SCOTTY There's no a move oot o him

JACK (*in irritated perplexity*) But hell ain't he an Englishman? What d he wanta—

JACK (*evidently fighting against his own conviction*) Aw say you guys give me a pain! What d they want puttin a spy on this old tub for?

DAVIS English? How d we know he's English? Cos he talks it? That ain't no proof Ain't you read in the papers how all them German spies they been catchin in England has been livin there for ten often as not twenty years an talks English as good's any one? An look here ain't you noticed he don't talk natural? He talks it too damn good that's what I mean He don't talk exactly like a toff does he Cocky?

DAVIS (*shaking his head sagely*) They're deep ones an there's a lot o things a sailor'll see in the ports he puts in ought to be useful to em An if he kin signal to em an they blow us up it's one ship less ain't it? (*Lowering his voice and indicating SMITTY'S bunk*) Or if he blows us up hussel'f

COCKY Not like any toff as I ever met up wiv

SCOTTY (*in alarmed tones*) Hush, mon! Here he comes! (*SCOTTY hurries over to a bench and sits down*) A thick silence settles over the fore castle The men look from one to another with uneasy glances SMITTY enters and sits down beside his bunk He is seemingly unaware of the dark glances of suspicion directed at him from all sides He slides his hand back stealthily over his mattress and his fingers move evidently feeling to make sure the box is still there The others follow this movement carefully with quick looks out of the corners of their eyes Their attitudes grow tense as if they were about to spring at him Satisfied the box is safe, SMITTY draws his hand away slowly and utters a sigh of relief)

DAVIS No an he don't talk it like us that's certain An he don't look English An what d we know about him when you come to look at it? Nothin! He ain't ever said where he comes from or why All we knows is he ships on here in London 'bout a year b'fore the war starts as an A B—stole his papers most lik'ly—when he don't know how to box the compass hardly Ain't that queer in itself? An was he ever open with us like a good shipmate? No he's always had that sly air about him s if he was hidin somethin

SMITTY (*in a casual tone which to them sounds sinister*) It's a good light night for the subs if there's any about (*For a moment he sits staring in front of him. Finally he seems to sense the hostile atmosphere of the fore-castle and looks from one to the other of the men in surprise. All of them avoid his eyes. He sighs with a puzzled expression and gets up and walks out of the doorway. There is silence for a moment after his departure and then a storm of excited talk breaks loose*.)

DAVIS Did you see him feelin' if it was there?

COCKY E ain't arf a sly one wiv is talk of submarines. Gawd blind im!

SCOTTY Did ye see the sneakin' looks he gave us?

DRISCOLL If ivir I saw black shame on a man's face 'twas on his whin he sat there!

JACK (*thoroughly convinced at last*) He looked bad to me. He's a crook aw right.

DAVIS (*excitedly*) What'll we do? We gotter do somethin' quick or— (*He is interrupted by the sound of something hitting against the port side of the fore-castle with a dull heavy thud. The men start to their feet in wild-eyed terror and turn as if they were going to rush for the deck. They stand that way for a strained moment scarcely breathing and listening intently*.)

JACK (*with a sickly smile*) Hell! It's on y a piece of driftwood or a floatin' log (*He sits down again*.)

DAVIS (*sarcastically*) Or a mine that

didn't go off—that time—or a piece o' wreckage from some ship they've sent to Davy Jones.

COCKY (*mopping his brow with a trembling hand*) Blimey! (*He sinks back weakly on a bench*.)

DRISCOLL (*furiously*) God blarst ut! No man at all cud be puttin' up wid the loike av this—an I'm not wan to be fearin' anything or any man in the worl'd. I'll stand up to me face to face but this divil's trickery in the dark— (*He starts for SMITTY'S bunk*) I'll throw ut out wan av the portholes an be done wid ut (*He reaches toward the mattress*.)

SCOTTY (*grabbing his arm—wildly*) Arre ye daft mon?

DAVIS Don't monkey with it. Drisc I knows what to do. Bring the bucket o' water here. Jack, will you? (*JACK gets it and brings it over to DAVIS*) An you Scotty see if he's back on the hatch.

SCOTTY (*cautiously peering out*) Aye, he's sittin' there the noo.

DAVIS Sing out if he makes a move. Lift up the mattress. Drisc—careful now! (*DRISCOLL does so with infinite caution*) Take it out, Jack—careful—don't shake it now for Christ's sake! Here—put it in the water—easy! There, that's fixed it! (*They all sit down with great sighs of relief*) The water'll git in and spoil it.

DRISCOLL (*slapping DAVIS on the back*) Good wurk for ye, Davis. Ye scut! (*He spits on his hands aggressively*) An now, what's to be done wid that black-hearted traitor?

COCKY (*belligerently*) Guv im a shove in the marf and eave im over the side!

DAVIS An serve him right!

JACK Aw say give him a chance Yuh can t prove nothin till yuh find out what s in there

DRISCOLL (*heatedly*) Is ut more proof yed be needin afther what we ve seen an heard? Then listen to me—an ut s Driscoll talkn—if there s divilmint in that box an we see plain twas his plan to murrder his own shipmates that have served him fair—— (*He raises his fist*) I ll choke his rotten heartt out wid me own hands an over the side wid him and one man missin in the mornin

DAVIS An no one the wiser He s the balmy kind what commits suicide

COCKY They angs spies ashore

JACK (*resentfully*) If hes done what yuh think I ll croak him my self Is that good enough for yuh?

DRISCOLL (*looking down at the box*) How ll we be openin this I wonder?

SCOTTY (*from the doorway—warningly*) Hes standin up

DAVIS We ll take his keys away from him when he comes in Quick Drisc! You an Jack get beside the door and grab him (*They get on either side of the door* DAVIS snatches a small coil of rope from one of the upper bunks) This ll do for me an Scotty to tie him

SCOTTY Hes turnin this way—he s comin! (*He moves away from door*)

DAVIS Stand by to lend a hand Cocky

COCKY Righto (*As SMITTY enters the forecattle he is seized roughly from both sides and his arms pinned behind him At first he struggles fiercely but seeing the uselessness of this he finally stands calmly and allows DAVIS and SCOTTY to tie up his arms*)

SMITTY (*when they have finished—with cold contempt*) If this is your idea of a joke I ll have to confess it s a bit too thick for me to enjoy

COCKY (*angrily*) Shut yer marf ear!

DRISCOLL (*roughly*) Ye ll find ut s no joke me bucko b fore we re done wid you (*To SCOTTY*) Kape your eye peeled Scotty and sing out if any ones comin

(*SCOTTY resumes his post at the door*)

SMITTY (*with the same icy contempt*) If you d be good enough to explain——

DRISCOLL (*furiously*) Explain is ut? Tis you ll do the explainn—an damn quick or we ll know the reason why (*To JACK and DAVIS*) Bring him here now (*They push SMITTY over to the bucket*) Look here ye murrderin swab D you see ut?

(*SMITTY looks down with an expression of amazement which rapidly changes to one of anguish*)

DAVIS (*with a sneer*) Look at him! S prised am t you? If you wants to try your dirty spyin tricks on us you ve gotter git up earlier in the mornin

COCKY Thorght yer weren t arf a fox didn t yer?

SMITTY (*trying to restrain his grow ing rage*) What—what do you mean? That s only—How dare—What are you doing with my private belongings?

COCKY (*sarcastically*) Ho yus! Pri vate b longings!

DRISCOLL (*shouting*) What is ut ye swine? Will you tell us to our faces? What s in ut?

SMITTY (*biting his lips—holding himself in check with a great effort*) Nothing but—— That s my busi ness You ll please attend to your dwn

DRISCOLL Oho ut is is ut? (*Shaking his fist in SMITTY s face*) Talk aisy now if ye know what s best for you Your business indade! Then we ll be makin ut ours I m thinkin (*To JACK and DAVIS*) Take his keys away from him an we ll see if there s one ll open ut maybe (*They start in searching SMITTY who tries to resist and kicks out at the bucket* DRISCOLL leaps forward and helps them push him away) Try to kick ut over wud ye? Did ye see him then? Trym to murdher us all the scut! Take that pail out av his way Cocky

(SMITTY struggles with all of his strength and keeps them busy for a few seconds As COCKY grabs the pail SMITTY makes a final effort and, lunging forward kicks again

at the bucket but only succeeds in hitting COCKY on the shin COCKY immediately sets down the pail with a bang and clutching his knee in both hands starts hopping around the forecastle groaning and swearing)

COCKY Ooow! Gawd strike me pink! Kicked me e did! Bloody bleedin rotten Dutch og! (*Approaching SMITTY who has given up the fight and is pushed back against the wall near the doorway with JACK and DAVIS holding him on either side—wrathfully at the top of his lungs*) Kick me will yer? I ll show yer what for yer bleedin sneak! (*He draws back his fist DRISCOLL pushes him to one side*)

DRISCOLL Shut your mouth! D you want to wake the whole ship? (*COCKY grumbles and retires to a bench nursing his sore shin*)

JACK (*taking a small bunch of keys from SMITTY s pocket*) Here yuh are Drisc

DRISCOLL (*taking them*) We ll soon be knowin (*He takes the pail and sits down placing it on the floor between his feet SMITTY again tries to break loose but he is too tired and is easily held back against the wall*)

SMITTY (*breathing heavily and very pale*) Cowards!

JACK (*with a growl*) Nix on the rough talk see! That dont git yuh nothin

DRISCOLL (*looking at the lock on the box in the water and then scrutinizing the keys in his hand*) Thus ll be ut I m thinkin (*He selects one and gingerly reaches his hand in the water*)

SMITTY (*his face grown livid—chokingly*) Don't you open that box Driscoll If you do so help me God I'll kill you if I have to hang for it.

DRISCOLL (*pausing—his hand in the water*) When I open this box I'll not be the wan to be kalt me sonny bye! I'm no dirty spy

SMITTY (*his voice trembling with rage His eyes are fixed on DRISCOLL'S hand*) Spy? What are you talking about? I only put that box there so I could get it quick in case we were torpedoed Are you all mad? Do you think I'm— (*Chokingly*) You stupid curs! You cowardly dolts! (*DAVIS claps his hand over SMITTY'S mouth*)

DAVIS That'll be enough from you! (*DRISCOLL takes the dripping box from the water and starts to fit in the key SMITTY springs forward furiously almost escaping from their grasp and drags them after him half-way across the forecabin*)

DRISCOLL Hold him ye devils! (*He puts the box back in the water and jumps to their aid COCKY hovers on the outskirts of the battle mindful of the kick he received*)

SMITTY (*raging*) Cowards! Damn you! Rotten curs! (*He is thrown to the floor and held there*) Cowards! Cowards!

DRISCOLL I'll shut your dirty mouth for you (*He goes to his bunk and pulls out a big wad of waste and comes back to SMITTY*)

SMITTY Cowards! Cowards!

DRISCOLL (*with no gentle hand slaps the waste over SMITTY'S mouth*) That'll teach you to be misnamin a man ye sneak Have ye a handkerchief Jack? (*JACK hands him one and he ties it tightly around SMITTY'S head over the waste*) That'll fix your gab Stand hun up now and tie his feet too so he'll not be movin (*They do so and leave him with his back against the wall near SCOTTY Then they all sit down beside DRISCOLL who again lifts the box out of the water and sets it carefully on his knees He picks out the key then hesitates looking from one to the other uncertainly*) We'd best be takin this to the skipper, d'you think maybe?

JACK (*irritably*) To hell with the Old Man This is our game and we can play it without no help

COCKY Now bleedin' horrors, I says!

DAVIS They'd only be takin' all the credit and makin' heroes of themselves

DRISCOLL (*boldly*) Here goes thim! (*He slowly turns the key in the lock The others instinctively turn away He carefully pushes the cover back on its hinges and looks at what he sees inside with an expression of puzzled astonishment The others crowd up close Even SCOTTY leaves his post to take a look*) What is it, Davis?

DAVIS (*mystified*) Looks funny don't it? Somethin' square tied up in a rubber bag Maybe it's dynamite—or somethin'—you can't never tell

JACK. Aw, it ain't got no works so it ain't no bomb, I'll bet

DAVIS (*dubiously*) They makes them all kinds they do

JACK Open it up Drisc

DAVIS Careful now!
(*DRISCOLL takes a black rubber bag resembling a large tobacco pouch from the box and unties the string which is wound tightly around the top. He opens it and takes out a small packet of letters also tied up with string. He turns these over in his hands and looks at the others questioningly*)

JACK (*with a broad grin*) On'y letters! (*Slapping DAVIS on the back*) Yuh're a hell of a Sherlock Holmes ain't yuh? Letters from his best girl too. I'll bet. Let's turn the Duke loose. What d'yuh say? (*He starts to get up*)

DAVIS (*fixing him with a withering look*) Don't be so damn smart Jack. Letters you says s if there never was no harm in 'em. How d'you suppose spies gets their orders and sends back what they finds out if it ain't by letters and such things? There's many a letter is worser'n any bomb.

COCKY Righto! They ain't as inner cent as they looks. I'll take me oath when you read 'em (*Pointing at SMITTY*) Not is Lordship's letters not be no means!

JACK (*sitting down again*) Well read 'em and find out
(*DRISCOLL commences untying the packet. There is a muffled groan of rage and protest from SMITTY*)

DAVIS (*triumphantly*) There! Listen to him! Look at him tryin' to git loose! Ain't that proof enough? He

knows well we're findin' him out. Listen to me! Love letters you says Jack s if they couldn't harm nothin'. Listen! I was reading in some magazine in New York on'y two weeks back how some German spy in Paris was writin' love letters to some woman spy in Switzerland who sent 'em on to Berlin, Germany. To read 'em you wouldn't suspect nothin'—just mush and all (*Impressively*)! But they had a way o' doin' it—a damn sneakin' way. They had a piece o' plain paper with pieces cut out of it an' when they puts it on top o' the letter they sees on'y the words what tells them what they wants to know. An' the Frenchies gets beat in a fight all on account o' that letter.

COCKY (*awed*) Gawd blimey! They ain't arf smart bleeders!

DAVIS (*seeing his audience is again all with him*) An' even if these letters of his do sound all right they may have what they calls a code. You can't never tell. (*To DRISCOLL who has finished untying the packet*) Read one of 'em. Drisc. My eyes is weak.

DRISCOLL (*takes the first one out of its envelope and bends down to the lantern with it. He turns up the wick to give him a better light*) I'm no hand to be readin' but I'll try ut. (*Again there is a muffled groan from SMITTY as he strains at his bonds*)

DAVIS (*gloatingly*) Listen to him! He knows. Go ahead, Drisc.

DRISCOLL (*his brow furrowed with concentration*) Ut begins. Dearest Man— (*His eyes travel down the page*) An' thin there's a lot av

blarney tellin him how much she misses him now she's gone away to singin school—an how she hopes he'll settle down to rale work an not be skylarkin around now that she's away loike he used to before she met up wid him—and ut ends

I love you betther than anythin in the worl'd You know that don't you dear? But before I can agree to live out my life wid you you must prove to me that the black shadow—I won't menshun ut's hateful name but you know what I mean—which might wiecek both our lives does not exist for you You can do that can't you dear? Don't you see you must for my sake? *(He pauses for a moment—then adds gruffly)* Uts signed Edith

(At the sound of the name SMITTY who has stood tensely with his eyes shut as if he were undergoing torture during the reading makes a muffled sound like a sob and half turns his face to the wall)

JACK *(sympathetically)* Hell! What's the use of readin that stuff even if—

DAVIS *(interrupting him sharply)* Wait! Where's that letter from Drisc?

DRISCOLL There's no address on the top av ut

DAVIS *(meaningly)* What'd I tell you? Look at the postmark Drisc—on the envelope

DRISCOLL The name that's written is Sidney Davidson wan hundred an—

DAVIS Never mind that O course it's a false name Look at the postmark

DRISCOLL There's a furrin stamp on ut by the looks av ut The narks blurred so it's hard to read *(He spells it out laboriously)* Be r—the nixt is an l I think—i—an an n

DAVIS *(excitedly)* Berlin! What did I tell you? I knew them letters was from Germany

COCKY *(shaking his fist in SMITTY'S direction)* Rotten ound!

(The others look at SMITTY as if this last fact had utterly condemned him in their eyes)

DAVIS Give me the letter Drisc Maybe I kin make somethin out of it *(DRISCOLL hands the letter to him)* You go through the others Drisc and sing out if you sees anythin queer *(He bends over the first letter as if he were determined to figure out its secret meaning)* JACK COCKY and SCOTTY look over his shoulder with eager curiosity DRISCOLL takes out some of the other letters running his eyes quickly down the pages He looks curiously over at SMITTY from time to time and sighs frequently with a puzzled frown

DAVIS *(disappointedly)* I gotter give it up It's too deep for me but we'll turn em over to the perlice when we docks at Liverpool to look through This one I got was written a year before the war started any way Find anythin in yours Drisc?

DRISCOLL They're all the same as the first—lovin blarney an how her singin is doin and the great things the Dutch teacher says about her voice, an how glad she is that her Sidney bye is worlkin hard an makin a man av himself for her sake

(SMITTY turns his face completely to the wall)

DAVIS (disgustedly) If we on'y had the code!

DRISCOLL (taking up the bottom letter) Hullol! Here's wan addressed to this ship—s s Glencarn ut says—whin we was in Cape Town sivin months ago— (Looking at the postmark) Ut's from London

DAVIS (eagerly) Read it!
(There is another choking groan from SMITTY)

DRISCOLL (reads slowly—his voice becomes lower and lower as he goes on) Ut begins wid simply the name Sidney Davidson—no dearest or sweetheart to this wan. Ut is only from your chance meetin with Harry—whin you were drunk—that I happen to know where to reach you. So you have run away to sea loike the coward you are because you knew I had found out the truth—the truth you have covered over with your mean little lies all the time I was away in Berlin and blindly trusted you. Very well you have chosen. You have shown that your drunkenness means more to you than any love or faith av mine. I am sorry—for I loved you. Sidney Davidson—but this is the end. I lave you—the memories an if ut is any satisfaction to you I lave you the realization that you have wrecked my loife as you have wrecked your own. My one remainin hope is that niver in God's world will I ivir see your face again. Good by Edith. (As he finishes there is a deep silence broken only by SMITTY's muffled

sobbing. The men cannot look at each other. DRISCOLL holds the rubber bag limply in his hand and some small white object falls out of it and drops noiselessly on the floor. Mechanically DRISCOLL leans over and picks it up and looks at it wonderingly.)

DAVIS (in a dull voice) What's that?

DRISCOLL (slowly) A bit av a dried up flower—a rose maybe. (He drops it into the bag and gathers up the letters and puts them back. He replaces the bag in the box and locks it and puts it back under SMITTY's mattress. The others follow him with their eyes. He steps softly over to SMITTY and cuts the ropes about his arms and ankles with his sheath knife and unties the handkerchief over the gag. SMITTY does not turn around but covers his face with his hands and leans his head against the wall. His shoulders continue to heave spasmodically but he makes no further sound.)

DRISCOLL (stalks back to the others—there is a moment of silence in which each man is in agony with the hopelessness of finding a word he can say—then DRISCOLL explodes) God stiffen us are we never goin to turn in fur a wink av sleep?

(They all start as if awakening from a bad dream and gratefully crawl into their bunks. Shoes and all turning their faces to the wall and pulling their blankets up over their shoulders. SCOTTY tiptoes past SMITTY out into the darkness. DRISCOLL turns down the light and crawls into his bunk as)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

If Men Played Cards as Women Do

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY GEORGE S KAUFMAN

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CAUTION—Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *If Men Played Cards as Women Do* being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America the British Empire including the Dominion of Canada, and the other countries of the copyright union is subject to a royalty and anyone presenting the play without the consent of the owners or their authorized agents will be liable to the penalties by law provided. Applications for the professional and amateur acting rights must be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York N Y

CHARACTERS

JOHN
BOB
MARC
GEORGE

IF MEN PLAYED CARDS AS WOMEN DO

SCENE—*The scene is JOHN'S home*

NOTE—*It is suggested that prior to the rise of the curtain a PAGE appear from each side of the stage bearing a card on which is printed the title of the sketch. They cross and exit on opposite sides.*

The scene is JOHN'S home—the living room. There are two doors, one leading to an outside hall, the other to the other rooms of the house. A card table has been set up in the middle of the room with four chairs around it and above it is another table on which are piled the necessary adjuncts for a poker game—a fancy cover for the table, cards, chips, a humidor. For the rest you have only to imagine an average and good looking room.

RISE—*As the curtain rises JOHN enters from another room, then turns and calls back through the open door as though he had forgotten something.*

IMPERTINENCE FROM THE AUTHOR—*It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that the sketch derives its entire value from the fact that it is played in forthright and manly fashion. In other words the actors must not imitate the voices of women.*

JOHN And don't forget I want things served very nicely. Use the best china and the filigree doilies. *(He starts to close the door—re-members another instruction.)* And at eleven o'clock just put the cigars and drinks right on the table and we'll stop playing. *(He closes the door and advances into the room. He looks the place over, rubs a suspecting finger along the table top in a quest for dust. He moves one chair a fraction of an inch and seems to think that that makes a difference in the appearance of the room. Then there comes a knock on the outer door. JOHN darts to the mirror and takes a quick look at himself, adjusts his tie.)* Come in! *(BOB enters.)* Hello, Bob!

BOB Hello, John! I thought I'd run over early to see if I could help you with the lunch.

JOHN Thanks—everything is ready. I baked a cake. Oh, say! That's a new hat, isn't it?

BOB Why no—don't you remember? It's the one I got at Knox's in the Spring. Then when they began wearing the bands higher I said to myself, why should I buy a new hat when I can have a man in and get him to put on another band for me just as easily as not? Do you like it?

JOHN Very attractive. I wonder how it would look on me? *(Takes it, starts to try it on, then smooths his hair before he finally puts it on. He looks at himself in the mirror, turns.)* What do you think?

BOB Lovely! Makes your face look thinner. *(Looks at the card table.)* Who's playing tonight?

JOHN George and Marc.

BOB Really? (*He takes his seat*)
Tell me—don't you think George is
looking older these days? How are
he and Ethel getting along? Any
better?

JOHN Not as good

BOB Funny what she saw in him
(*There is a knock on the door*)

JOHN Come in!
(*GEORGE enters*)

GEORGE (*greatly surprised as
though they were the last people he
had expected to see*) Hello boys!

JOHN Hello George! Well well
well!

BOB (*rises*) Hello George! Never
saw you look so young!

GEORGE (*in great excitement*) Say
I just met Ed Jennings down the
street and what do you think? He
says Jim Perkins told him that Will
Harper's wife may leave him!

BOB You don't say so! (*Sits again*)

GEORGE What do you think of that?
(*His excitement dies a little he
looks around*) The room looks
lovely John You've changed things
around haven't you? Awfully nice
But if you don't mind just a little
suggestion—I'm not sure that I like
that table up there where you've
got it (*Another critical look*) And
if you had these chairs reuphol-
stered in blue——

JOHN Well what do you think of a
plafond?

GEORGE That would be nice Oh
say! I've got a T L for you, Bob

BOB *Oh good! What is it?

GEORGE Well you owe me one first

BOB Oh tell me mine! Don't be
mean!

GEORGE Well all right Frank Wil-
hams said you looked lovely in your
dinner coat

BOB That is nice

JOHN How's the baby George?

GEORGE Awfully cranky lately He's
teething I left him with the nurse
tonight—first chance I've had to
get out (*Takes a seat at the table*)
Who else is coming?

JOHN Just Marc

GEORGE (*with meaning*) Oh is he?
I want to speak to you boys about
Marc Don't you think he's been
seeing a lot of that Fleming woman
lately?

BOB He certainly has He was at the
Biltmore having tea with her yes-
terday—I know because a cousin
of Tom Hennessey's saw him

JOHN Which cousin is that?

BOB I don't know whether you
know him—Ralph Wilson He mar-
ried that Akron girl—they have
two children

GEORGE You remember—one of
them is backward

JOHN Oh yes! I heard that (*An-
other knock on the door*) Come in!
(*MARC enters*)

MARC Hello everybody!

GEORGE JOHN *and* BOB Hello
Marc!

MARC He was very good looking as
a boy

MARC I'm sorry to be the last but
we have a new maid and you know
what that means

GEORGE Isn't this room the most
terrible thing you ever saw?
(MARC goes to the table up stage
picks up a cigar and shows it to the
others They are scornful)

JOHN That's all right Say I like the
cut of that vest Marc Look boys!
Don't you like that vest?

MARC Huh! Ten cents (Pause) I
really wanted to get that water my
self I'd like to see his kitchen
(JOHN re enters with the water)
Oh thanks John (MARC drinks)

MARC It is nice isn't it?

GEORGE Oh lovely! Turn around
and let's see the back
(GEORGE and JOHN both get up and
examine his clothes pull down his
trousers etc)

JOHN Is it cold enough Marc?

MARC I had it made right in the
house—I have a little tailor that
comes in Four dollars a day

MARC (indicating that it isn't) Oh
yes Of course I generally put ice
in myself (Sits)

GEORGE Excuse me—there's a little
spot— (He moistens a finger and
rubs MARC's lapel)

GEORGE Say we had the loveliest
new dessert tonight!

JOHN Well shall we play a little
poker?

BOB Oh! What was it? It's awfully
hard to find a new dessert

MARC (sitting) Yes sure Oh John
may I trouble you for a glass of
water?

MARC (with emphasis) Is it?

JOHN Why of course Marc
(GEORGE and BOB sit again)

GEORGE Well it was a sort of prune
whip You make it out of just noth-
ing at all And then if company
comes when you don't expect
them—

MARC I'll get it myself if you'll tell
me where—

BOB I want the recipe

JOHN Oh no—that's all right (He
goes out A pause The men look
at each other meaningly Their
heads come together)

MARC How many eggs?
(JOHN up at the rear table Turns
on this speech)

MARC John doesn't look well, does
he?

JOHN Does it take much butter?

BOB No Did you notice those lines?
He can't hide them much longer

GEORGE Oh, no—very little I'll
bring you the recipe Tuesday after
noon
(MARC feels a rough place on his
chin Rubs it then takes a good-
sized mirror out of his pocket and

stands it on the table Examines his chin Then takes out a safety razor and starts to shave After that he takes out two military brushes and combs his hair The others pay no attention to this JOHN is at the rear table with his back to the audience BOB is seated fooling with the cards GEORGE is seated calmly smoking After MARC has put everything away BOB breaks the silence

BOB Are we ready?

JOHN No! Wait just a minute *(He brings down the fancy table cover which he spreads on the table)*
There we are!

MARC *(feeling it)* That's nice John
Where'd you get it?

JOHN Why I bought a yard of this plain sateen down at Macy's—

GEORGE Really? How much was it?

JOHN A dollar sixty three It was reduced Then I had this edging in the house

BOB Awfully nice!

MARC Oh say! Walter Sharp just got back from Paris—

GEORGE He did?

MARC Yes And *he* says they're wearing trousers longer over there

GEORGE Really?
(There is quite a fuss about it)

JOHN *(brings chips and takes his seat)* What'll we play for?

BOB Oh what's the difference? One cent limit?

GEORGE Does it matter who deals?
(Takes the cards from BOB)

MARC Say did you hear about Ed die Parker?

JOHN No

MARC Well it seems he saw these advertisements about how to get thin and he thought he'd try them You know Eddie's taken on a lot of weight since his marriage

GEORGE Twenty pounds—absolutely

MARC Well they sent him some powders and he began taking them and what do you think?

GEORGE Well? *(MARC whispers to him)* You don't say so?

JOHN and BOB *(excited)* What was it? What was it?

(GEORGE whispers to JOHN who whispers to BOB great excitement)

MARC Who has the cards?

GEORGE Here they are *(Starts to deal—poker hands)*

MARC I don't want to play late I've been shopping all day

GEORGE And I have an appointment at the barber's tomorrow I'm going to try a new way of getting my hair cut
(The deal is completed)

BOB *(picking up a few cards)*
Which is higher—aces or kings?

GEORGE Now who bets first?

JOHN Are these funny little things clubs?

MARC What are the chips worth? MARC Well?

JOHN Let's have them all worth the same thing BOB Well?

BOB A penny apiece

GEORGE Say Lord & Taylor are having a wonderful sale of nightgowns!

MARC What do you pay your maid?

BOB Sixty, five but she isn't worth it
(*The three start talking at once about maids and JOHN has a hard time being heard*)

JOHN (*excited*) Boys! Boys! Listen to this! Boys!

ALL Well?

JOHN (*excited*) I *knew* there was something I wanted to tell you!

ALL (*they must not speak together*) What is it?

JOHN Well now in the first place you must promise not to breathe a word of it to anybody because I got it in absolute confidence and I promised I wouldn't tell

GEORGE What is it?

JOHN It's about Sid Heflin! Now you won't tell anybody? At least don't let on you got it from me!

ALL No!

JOHN Well I'm told—and I got this pretty straight mind you—I'm told that he's going to—ah — (*He puts the message across with his eyes*)

MARC I don't believe it!

BOB What do you mean?

GEORGE When?

JOHN In April!

MARC April!
(*They count on their fingers, up to four*)

GEORGE What do you mean?

JOHN Exactly! They were married late in January!
(*They all throw down their hands and begin talking at once*)

CURTAIN

Another Way Out

A COMEDY

BY LAWRENCE LANGNER

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CHARACTERS

MARGARET MARSHALL

MRS ABBEY

POMEROY PENDLETON

BARONESS DE MEAUVILLE

CHARLES P K FENTON

TIME *The Present.*

ANOTHER WAY OUT

SCENE—*The studio in PENDLETON'S apartment. A large room with sky light in center wall, doors right and left, table set for breakfast, a vase with red flowers decorates the table. Center back stage in front of sky light modeling stand upon which is placed a rough statuette covered by cloth. To one side of this is a large screen. The furnishings are many hued, the cushions a flare of color, and the pictures fantastically futuristic.*

At Rise MRS ABBEY *a benevolent looking middle aged woman in neat clothes and apron, is arranging some dishes on the table.* MARGARET *a very modern young woman is exercising vigorously. She is decidedly good-looking. Her eyes are direct, her complexion fresh, and her movements free. Her brown hair is bobbed, and she wears a picturesque Grecian robe.*

MRS ABBEY Breakfast is ready, ma'am

(MARGARET sits at table and helps herself. Exit MRS ABBEY, left.)

MARGARET (calling) Pommy dear, Breakfast is on the table.

PENDLETON (from without) I'll be there in a moment.

(MARGARET glances through paper. PENDLETON enters door right. He is tall and thin, and of æsthetic appearance. His long blond hair is brushed loosely over his forehead, and he is dressed in a heliotrope-colored dressing gown. He lights a cigarette.)

MARGARET I thought you were going to stop smoking before breakfast.

PENDLETON My dear, I can't possibly stand the taste of tooth paste in my mouth all day. (PENDLETON sits at table. Enters MRS ABBEY with tray. PENDLETON helps himself, then drops his knife and fork with a clang. MRS ABBEY and MARGARET are startled.)

MRS ABBEY Anything the matter, sir?

PENDLETON Dear dear! My breakfast is quite spoiled again.

MRS ABBEY (concerned) Spoiled, sir?

PENDLETON (pointing to red flowers on breakfast table) Look at those flowers, Mrs. Abbey. Not only are they quite out of harmony with the color scheme in this room, but they're positively red, and you know I have a perfect horror of red.

MRS ABBEY But you like them that color sometimes, sir. What am I to do when you're so temperamental about em?

MARGARET Temperamental? I should say bad tempered.

MRS ABBEY (soothingly) Oh, no, ma'am. It isn't bad temper. I understand Mr. Pendleton. It's just another bad night he's had, that's what it is.

PENDLETON (sarcastically polite) Mrs. Abbey, you appear to have an intimate knowledge of how I pass the nights. It's becoming quite embarrassing.

MRS ABBEY You mustn't mind an old woman like me sir

(The sound of a piano hopelessly out of tune in the apartment up stairs is heard, the player banging out Mendelssohn's Wedding March with unusual insistence)

PENDLETON There! That con-founded piano again!

MARGARET And they always play the Wedding March There must be an old maid living there

MRS ABBEY They're doing that for a reason

MARGARET What reason?

MRS ABBEY Their cook told me yesterday that her missus thinks if she keeps on a playing of the Wedding March praps it'll give you an Mr Pendleton the idea of getting married She don't believe in couples livin' together, like you an Mr Pendleton

MARGARET No?

MRS ABBEY And I just said you an Mr Pendleton had been living together so long it was my opinion you might just as well be married an done with it

MARGARET *(angrily)* Your opinion is quite uncalled for Mrs Abbey

PENDLETON Why shouldn't Mrs Abbey give us her opinion? It may be valuable Look at her experiences in matrimony

MRS ABBEY In matrimony and out of it too

MARGARET *(sitting)* But Mrs Abbey has no right to discuss our affairs with other people's maids

MRS ABBEY I'll be glad to quit if I don't suit the mistress

MARGARET *(angrily)* There! Mistress again! How often have I asked you not to refer to me as the mistress?

MRS ABBEY No offense ma'am

PENDLETON You'd better see if there's any mail Mrs Abbey and take those flowers away with you

MRS ABBEY Very well, sir *(Exit)*

MARGARET What an old-fashioned point of view Mrs Abbey has *(PENDLETON takes up paper and commences to read)*

MARGARET Pommy, why do you stoop so?

PENDLETON Am I stooping?

MARGARET I'm tired of telling you You ought to take more exercise *(PENDLETON continues to read)*

MARGARET One reason why the Greeks were the greatest of artists was because they cultivated the body as carefully as the mind

PENDLETON Oh! Hang the Greeks! *(Enter MRS ABBEY right with letters)*

MRS ABBEY There are your letters sir *(Coldly)* And these are yours ma'am *(Exit MRS ABBEY left)*

MARGARET *(who has opened her letters meanwhile)* How delightful! Tom Del Valli has asked us to a party at his studio next Friday

PENDLETON *(opening his letters)* Both of us?

MARGARET (*giving him letter*) Yes and Helen Marsden wants us for Saturday

PENDLETON Both of us?

MARGARET (*picking up another letter*) Yes and here's one from Bobby Watson for Sunday

PENDLETON Both of us?

MARGARET Yes

PENDLETON Really Margaret this is becoming exasperating (*Holds up letters*) Here are four more I suppose for both of us People keep on inviting us out together time after time as though we were the most conventional married couple on God's earth

MARGARET Do you object to going out with me?

PENDLETON (*doubtfully*) No it isn't that But we're having too much of a good thing And I've come to the conclusion that it's your fault

MARGARET (*indignantly*) Oh! it's my fault? Of course you'd blame me Why?

PENDLETON Because you have such an absurd habit of boasting to people of your devotion for me when we're out

MARGARET You surely don't expect me to quarrel with you in public?

PENDLETON It isn't necessary to go to that extent But then everybody believes that we're utterly almost stupidly in love with one another, what can you expect?

MARGARET You said once you never wanted me to suppress anything

PENDLETON That was before we began to live together

MARGARET What could I have done?

PENDLETON (*stands up*) Anything just so we could have a little more freedom instead of being tied to one another the way we are Never a moment when we're not together, never a day when I'm not interviewed by special article writers from almost every paper and magazine in the country as the only successful exponent of the theory that love can be so perfect that the marriage contract degrades it I put it to you Margaret, if this is a free union it is simply intolerable!

MARGARET But aren't we living together so as to have more freedom? Think of what it might be if we were married Didn't you once write that 'When marriage comes in at the door freedom flies out at the window'?

PENDLETON Are we any better off with everybody treating us as though we were living together to prove a principle?

MARGARET Well aren't we mentally? You said so yourself We can be a beautiful example to other people and show them how to lead the pure natural lives of the later Greeks?

PENDLETON Damn the later Greeks! Why do you always throw those confounded later Greeks in my face? We've got to look at it from our

standpoint This situation must come to an end

able Besides I have no interest whatsoever in women at least, in the women we know

MARGARET What can we do?

MARGARET For that matter I don't know any eligible men

PENDLETON It rests with you

PENDLETON What about Bob Lockwood?

MARGARET With me?

PENDLETON You can compromise yourself with somebody publicly That'll put an end to everything

MARGARET But he's your best friend!

MARGARET How will that end it?

PENDLETON Exactly—no man ever really trusts his best friend He'll probably compromise you without compunction

PENDLETON It'll break down the morally sanctified atmosphere in which we're living Then perhaps people will regard us as immoral and treat us like decent human beings again

MARGARET I'm afraid he'd be too dangerous—he tells you all his secrets Whom will you choose?

MARGARET But I don't want to compromise myself

PENDLETON It's a matter of complete indifference to me

PENDLETON If you believe in your own ideas you must

MARGARET I've heard a lot of queer stories about Jean Roberts How would she do?

MARGARET But why should I have to do it?

PENDLETON (*firmly*) Margaret I don't mind being party to a flirtation—but I draw the line at being the victim of a seduction

PENDLETON It will be so easy for you

MARGARET Why can't we both be compromised? That would be better still

MARGARET Why not leave it to chance? Let it be the next interesting woman you meet

PENDLETON I should find it a bore You unless my memory fails me would enjoy it

PENDLETON That might be amusing But there must be an age limit And how about you?

MARGARET You needn't be cynical Even if you don't enjoy it you can work it into a novel

MARGARET (*takes cloth off statuette and discloses figure of Apollo in rough modeling clay*) Mel Why not the new model who is coming today to pose for my Apollo?

PENDLETON It's less exertion to imagine an affair of that sort and the result would probably be more sale

PENDLETON Well, if he's anything

like that you ought to be able to create a sensation Then perhaps we shall have some real freedom

MARGARET Pommy do you still love me as much as you did?

PENDLETON How you sentimentalize! Do you think I'd be willing to enter into a flirtation with a strange woman if I didn't want to keep on living with you?

MARGARET And we won't have to break up our little home will we?

PENDLETON No anything to save the home (*Catches himself*) My God! If any of my readers should hear me say that! To think that I Pomeroy Pendleton should be trying to save my own home And yet how characteristically paradoxical

MARGARET (*interrupting*) You are going to philosophize! Give me a kiss (*She goes to him sits on his lap and places her arm on his shoulder he takes out cigarette she lights it for him*)

PENDLETON (*brought back to reality*) I have some work to do—I must go

MARGARET A kiss!

PENDLETON (*kisses her carelessly*) There let me go

MARGARET I want a real kiss

PENDLETON Don't be silly dear I can't play this morning I've simply got to finish my last chapter (*A bell rings MRS ABBEY enters and goes to door*)

MRS ABBEY There's a lady to see Mr Pendleton

MARGARET Tell her to come in!

PENDLETON But Margaret!

MARGARET Remember! (*Significantly*) The first woman you meet! (*Exit MARGARET MRS ABBEY enters with BARONESS DE MEAUVILLE Exit MRS ABBEY*)

BARONESS DE MEAUVILLE (*speaking with a pronounced English accent*) Good morning Mr Pendleton I'm the Baroness de Meauville!

PENDLETON (*recalling her name*) Baroness de Meauville? Ah the costumiere?

BARONESS Not a costumiere Mr Pendleton I am an artist an artist in modern attire A woman is to me what a canvas is to a painter

PENDLETON Excuse me for receiving you in my dressing gown I was at work

BARONESS I like to see men in dressing gowns—yours is charming

PENDLETON (*flattered and pleased*) Do you like it? I designed it myself

BARONESS (*looking seductively into his eyes*) How few really creative artists there are in America

PENDLETON (*modestly*) You flatter me

BARONESS Not at all You must know that I'm a great admirer of yours Mr Pendleton I've read every one of your books I feel I know you as an old friend

PENDLETON That's very nice of you!

(*The BARONESS reclines on couch takes jeweled cigarette case from reticule and offers PENDLETON a cigarette*)

BARONESS Will you smoke?

PENDLETON Thanks (*PENDLETON lights her cigarette then his own He draws his chair up to the couch An atmosphere of mutual interest is established*)

BARONESS Mr Pendleton I have a mission in life It is to make the American woman the best dressed woman in the world I came here to day because I want you to help me

PENDLETON But I have no ambitions in that direction

BARONESS Why should you have ambitions? Only the bourgeoisie have ambitions We artists have inspirations I want to breathe into you the spirit of my great undertaking Already I have opened my place in the smartest part of the Avenue Already I have drawn my assistants from all parts of the world Nothing is lacking to complete my plans but you

PENDLETON Me? Why me?

BARONESS (*endearingly*) Are you not considered one of the foremost men of letters in America?

PENDLETON (*modestly*) Didn't you say you had read all my books?

BARONESS Are you not the only writer who has successfully portrayed the emotional side of American life?

PENDLETON (*decidedly*) Yes

BARONESS Exactly That is why I have chosen you to write my advertisements

PENDLETON (*aghast*) But Baroness!

BARONESS You're not going to say that It's so ordinary

PENDLETON But but you want me to write advertisements!

BARONESS Please don't disappoint me

PENDLETON Yes I suppose that's so But one has a sense of pride

BARONESS Art comes before Pride Consider my feelings an aristocrat coming here to America and engaging in commerce and advertising and other dreadful things and all for the sake of Art!

PENDLETON But you make money out of it!

BARONESS Only incidentally Just as you in writing my advertisements, would make say ten thousand or so as a sort of accident But don't let us talk of money It's perfectly revolting isn't it? Art is Life and I believe in Life for Art's sake That's why I'm a success

PENDLETON Indeed? How interesting Please go on

BARONESS When a woman comes to me for a gown I don't measure body why should I? I measure her mind I find her color harmony In a moment I can tell whether she ought to wear scarlet mauve taupe magenta or any other color, so as to fall into her proper rhythm Every

one has a rhythm you know (PENDLETON *sits on sofa*) But I don't have to explain all this to you Mr Pendleton You understand it intuitively This heliotrope you are wearing shows me at once that you are in rhythm

PENDLETON (*thinks of MARGARET*) I'm not so sure that I am What you say interests me May I ask you a question?

BARONESS Yes but I may not answer it

PENDLETON Why do you wear heliotrope and the same shade as mine?

BARONESS (*with mock mystery*) You mustn't ask me that

PENDLETON I'm all curiosity

BARONESS Curiosity is dangerous

PENDLETON Supposing I try to find out?

BARONESS That may be even more dangerous

PENDLETON I'm fond of that kind of danger

BARONESS Take care! I'm very fragile

PENDLETON Isn't heliotrope in rhythm with the faint reflection of passion?

BARONESS How brutal of you to have said it!

PENDLETON (*coming closer to her*) I too am in rhythm with heliotrope

BARONESS (*with joy*) How glad I am Thank God you've no desire to kiss my lips

PENDLETON Only your finger tips (*They exchange kisses on finger tips*)

PENDLETON Your fingers are like soft pale waxen tapers!

BARONESS Your kisses are the breathings that light them into quivering flames!

PENDLETON Exquisite—exquisite!

BARONESS (*withdrawing her hands*) That was a moment!

PENDLETON We must have many such

BARONESS Many? That's too near too much

PENDLETON (*feverishly*) We shall, dear lady

BARONESS How I adore your writings! They have made me realize the beauty of an ideal union the love of one man for one woman at a time Let us have such a union you and me

PENDLETON (*taken back*) But I live in such a union already

BARONESS (*rising in amazement*) And only a moment ago you kissed me!

PENDLETON Well—what of it?

BARONESS Don't you see what we've done? You are living in one of those wonderful unions you describe in your books—and I've let you kiss me I've committed a sacrilege

PENDLETON You're mistaken It isn't a sacrilege It's an opportunity

BARONESS (*dramatically*) How can you say that—you whose words have inspired my deepest intimacies No I must go (*Makes for the door*) I—must—go

PENDLETON You don't understand I exaggerated everything so in my confounded books

BARONESS Please ask her to forgive me Please tell her I thought you were married otherwise never would I have permitted you to kiss me

PENDLETON What made you think I was married?

BARONESS One often believes what one hopes

PENDLETON You take it too seriously Let me explain

BARONESS What is there to explain? Our experience has been complete Why spoil it by anti climax?

PENDLETON Am I never to see you again?

BARONESS Who knows? If your present union should end and some day your soul needs—some one? (*Exit door center, her manner full of promise*)

PENDLETON (*with feeling*) Good bye—long pale fingers (*Enter MARGARET door right*)

MARGARET Did you get a good start with the scandal?

PENDLETON Not exactly I may as well admit it was a failure through no fault of mine of course And now I simply must finish that last

chapter (*He exits MARGARET rings MRS ABBEY enters*)

MARGARET You may clear Mrs Abbey

MRS ABBEY Very well ma'am (*She attends to clearing the table*)

MARGARET Mrs Abbey have you worked for many people living together like Mr Pendleton and myself?

MRS ABBEY Lor Ma'am yes I've worked in nearly every house on the south side of Washington Square

MARGARET Mr Pendleton, says I'm as domestic as any wife could be Were the others like me?

MRS ABBEY Most of them ma'am but some was regular hussies not only a livin' with their fellers—but havin' a good time too That's what I call real immoral

(*Bell rings MRS ABBEY opens door center and passes out Conversation with FENTON without is heard MRS ABBEY comes back*)

MRS ABBEY A young man wants to see you ma'am

MARGARET That's the new model I'll get my working apron (*Exit MARGARET door right MRS ABBEY calls through door center*)

MRS ABBEY You can come in (*Enter door left CHARLES P K FENTON dictionary salesman He is a strikingly handsome young man of fensively smartly dressed in a black and white check suit, gaudy tie and white socks His hair is brushed back from his forehead like a glossy sheath He carries a black bag His manner is distinctly "male"*)

MRS ABBEY (*points to screen*) You can undress behind there

FENTON Undress? Say what's this? A Turkish bath?

MRS ABBEY Did you expect to have a private room all to yourself?

FENTON (*looking around*) What am I to undress for?

MRS ABBEY The Missus will be here in a minute

FENTON Good night! I'm goin' (*Makes for door*)

MRS ABBEY What's the matter? Ain't you the Missus new modell?

FENTON A modell! Hal! Hal! You've sure got the wrong number this time. I'm in the dictionary line ma'am

MRS ABBEY Well, of all the impudence! You a book agent, and a walkin' in here

FENTON Well, you asked me in didn't you? Can't I see the Missus, jest for a minute?

MRS ABBEY (*good naturedly*) Very well. Here she is (*Confidentially*) And I advise you to remove that Spearmint from your mouth if you want to sell any dictionaries in this house

FENTON (*placing hand to mouth*) Where shall I put it?

MRS ABBEY You'd better swallow it!
(*FENTON tries to do so chokes turns red, and places his hand to mouth*)

MARGARET (*to FENTON*) I'm so glad to see you
(*FENTON is most embarrassed MRS ABBEY in surprise attempts to explain situation*)

MRS ABBEY But ma'am—

MARGARET You may go Mrs. Abbey

MRS ABBEY But but ma'am—

MARGARET (*severely*) You may go Mrs. Abbey (*Exit MRS ABBEY in a huff*) I'm so glad they sent you up to see me. Won't you sit down?
(*FENTON finds it a difficult matter to handle the situation. He adopts his usual formula for an opening but his speech is mechanical and without conviction. MARGARET adds to the embarrassment by stepping around him and examining him with professional interest*)

FENTON Madam, I represent the Globe Advertising Publishing Sales Co., the largest publishers of dictionaries in the world.

MARGARET (*continuing to appraise him*) Then you're not the new modell?

FENTON No, ma'am

MARGARET What a pity! Never mind, go on.

FENTON As I was saying, ma'am, I represent the Advertising Globe Publishing—I mean the Globe Publishing Sales Publishing Co., the largest publishers of dictionaries in the world. For some time past we have felt there was a demand for a new Encyclopaedic Dictionary, madam, one that would not only fill

up a good deal of space in the book shelf making an attractive addition to the home but also containing the most complete collection of words in the English language

MARGARET (*who has taken a pencil and is measuring FENTON while he speaks FENTON'S discomfort is obvious He attempts to rearrange his tie and coat thinking she is examining him*) Please go on talking it's so interesting

FENTON Statistics show that the Woman of Average Education in America Madam has command of but fifteen hundred words This new dictionary Madam (*produces book from bag*) will give you command of over eight hundred and fifty thousand

MARGARET (*archly*) So you are a dealer in words—how perfectly romantic

FENTON (*warming*) Most of these words madam are not used more than a dozen times a year They are our Heritage from the Past And all these words to say nothing of the fact that the dictionary fills five inches in a book shelf making an attractive addition to the library being handsomely bound in half cloth—all these are yours ma'am for the price of one dollar (*He places dictionary in her hand She examines it*) If you have a son madam the possession of this dictionary will give him an opportunity of acquiring that knowledge of our language which made Abraham Lincoln the Father of our Country Madam, opportunity knocks at the door only once and *this is your opportunity at one dollar*

MARGARET (*meaningly*) Yes this is my opportunity! I'll buy the dictionary and now (*sweetly*) won't you tell me your name?

FENTON (*pocketing dollar*) My name is Charles P. K. Fenton

MARGARET Mr Fenton would you mind doing me a favor?

FENTON (*looking dubiously toward the screen*) Why I guess not, ma'am

MARGARET I want you to take off your coat

FENTON (*puzzled*) You're not trying to kid me, ma'am?

MARGARET I just want to see your development Do you mind?

FENTON (*removes coat*) Why, no, ma'am if that's all you want

MARGARET Now bring your arm up tighten the muscles (*FENTON does as she bids MARGARET thumps his arm approvingly*) Splendid! You must take lots of exercise Mr Fenton.

FENTON Not me, ma'am I never had no time for exercise I got that workin' in a freight yard

MARGARET I suppose you think me rather peculiar Mr Fenton

FENTON You said it Miss

MARGARET You see I'm a sculptress (*Points to statuette*) This is my work

FENTON You made that? Gee! that's great (*Examines statuette*) Just

like them statues at the Metropolitan

MARGARET What do you mean by personality Mr Fenton

MARGARET That figure is Apollo Mr Fenton

FENTON Well it's what sells the goods I don't know how else to explain it exactly I'll look it up in the dictionary (*Takes dictionary and turns pages*) Here it is ma'am Per—per—why it isn't in here I guess they don't put in words that every body knows We all know what personality means It's what sells the goods

FENTON Oh Apollo

MARGARET I was to engage a professional model for it but I could never hope to get a professional as fine a type as you Will you pose for it?

MARGARET I adore a strong virile masculine personality

FENTON (*aghast*) Me? That feller there without any clothes (*Dubiously*) Well I don't know It's kind of chilly here

FENTON I don't quite get you madam

MARGARET If I draped you it would spoil some of your lines (*Seeing his hesitation*) But I will if you like

MARGARET The men I know have so much of the feminine in them

FENTON (*relieved*) Ah, now you're talking

FENTON Oh Cissies!

MARGARET So you'll really come?

MARGARET (*flirtingly*) They lack the magnetic forcefulness which I like so much in you

FENTON How about this evening?

FENTON I believe you are kidding me Does that mean you like me?

MARGARET Splendid! Sit down (*Fenton does so*) Mr Fenton you've quite aroused my curiosity I know so few business men Is your work interesting?

MARGARET That's rather an embarrassing question

FENTON Well I can't say it was until I started selling around this neighborhood

FENTON You must or you wouldn't let me speak to you this way

MARGARET Is it difficult?

MARGARET (*archly*) Never mind whether I like you Tell me whether you like me?

FENTON Not if you've got personality Miss That's the thing personality If a feller hasn't got personality, he can't sell goods that's sure

FENTON (*feeling more at home*) Gee! I didn't get on to you at first Sure I like you

MARGARET Then we're going to be good friends

FENTON You just bet we are Say, got a date for tomorrow evening?

MARGARET No

FENTON How about the movies? There's a fine feature film at the Strand Theda Bara in *The Lone some Vampire* five reels They say it's got *Gloria's Romance* beat a mile

MARGARET I don't know that I'd care to go there

FENTON How about a run down to Coney?

MARGARET Coney! I've always wanted to do wild pagan things

FENTON Say you'll tell me your name won't you?

MARGARET Margaret Marshall

FENTON Do you mind if I call you Margie?

MARGARET If you do I must call you—

FENTON Charley Gee I like the name of Margie Some class to that

MARGARET I'm glad you like it

FENTON (*moving nearer*) And some class to you!

MARGARET (*coolly*) So you really like me?

FENTON You bet Say, before I go you've got to give me a kiss, Margie

MARGARET Well I don't know Aren't you rather rushing me?

FENTON Say you are a kiddie (*He draws her up from her chair and kisses her warmly on the lips*)

MARGARET (*ecstatically*) You have the true Greek spirit! (*They kiss again*) If only Pommy would kiss me that way!

FENTON Pommy? Who's Pommy?

MARGARET Pommy is the man I live with

FENTON Your husband!

MARGARET No we just live together You see we don't believe in marriage

FENTON (*pushing her away in horror*) I thought there was something queer about all this Does he live here?

MARGARET Yes (*Points to door*) He's in there now

FENTON (*excitedly*) Good night! I'm going (*Looks for hat*)

MARGARET (*speaking with real anguish*) You're surely not going just on that account

FENTON (*taking hat and bag*) Isn't that enough?

MARGARET (*emotionally*) Please don't go Listen I can't suppress my feeling for you I never do with any body I liked you the moment I saw you I want you as a friend a good friend You can't go now just when everything's about to begin

FENTON (*severely*) Fair's fair Miss If he's keeping you you can't be taking up with me at the same time That puts the finish on it

MARGARET But he doesn't keep me
I keep myself

FENTON Wait a minute You support yourself and live with him of your own free will Then you've got no excuse for being immoral isn't it like you had to make your living at it *(At door)* Good bye

MARGARET But I can explain everything

FENTON It's no use Miss Even though I am a salesman I've got a sense of honor I sized you up as a married woman when I came in just now or I never would have made love to you at all

MARGARET Oh—wait! Supposing I should want to buy some more dictionaries

FENTON *(returning)* You've got my card Miss The phone number is on it Bryant 4253 *(Sees MARGARET hang her head)* Don't feel hurt Miss You'll get over these queer ideas some day and when you do well you've got my number So long kid *(Exit FENTON)*

MARGARET *(taking his card from table and placing it to her lips soulfully)* My Apollo Bryant 4253!
(PENDLETON enters)

PENDLETON Did you get a good start with your scandal? *(MARGARET hangs her head)* It's no use I'm convinced we're in a hopeless muddle

MARGARET I heartily agree with you

PENDLETON You've changed your mind very suddenly

MARGARET I have my reasons

PENDLETON The fact is Margaret that so long as we live together we're public figures with everybody else as our jury

MARGARET But lots of people read your books and respect us

PENDLETON The people that respect us are worse than the people that don't

MARGARET If they wouldn't always be bothering about our morals!

PENDLETON If we continue living together we shall simply be giving up our freedom to prove we are free

MARGARET *(faltering)* I suppose we ought to separate

PENDLETON I believe we should

MARGARET We'll have to give up the studio

PENDLETON *(regretfully)* Yes

MARGARET It's taken a long time to make the place homelike

PENDLETON We've been very comfortable here

MARGARET I shall miss you at meals

PENDLETON I shall have to start eating at clubs and restaurants again no more good home cooking

MARGARET We're kind of used to one another aren't we?

PENDLETON It isn't an easy matter to break after five years

MARGARET And there are mighty few studios with as good a light as this I don't want to separate if you don't

PENDLETON But Margaret (*Piano starts playing wedding march*) There that confounded piano again (*Seized with an idea*) Margaret there's another way out!

MARGARET (*with same idea*) You mean we ought to marry!

PENDLETON Yes marry and do it at once That'll end everything

MARGARET Let's do it right away and get it over with I simply must finish my Apollo

PENDLETON I'm going to buy you a new gown to get married in a wedding present from Baroness de Meauville's

MARGARET I don't know that I want a De Meauville gown

PENDLETON Please let me I want to give you something to symbolize our new life together

MARGARET Very well And in return I'll buy you a dictionary so that I won't have to keep on correcting your spelling
(*Exit PENDLETON MARGARET goes to phone and consults FENTON'S card*)

MARGARET Bryant 4253? Can I speak to Mr Fenton? (*Enter MRS ABBEY*) Mrs Abbey What do you think? We're going to get married!

MRS ABBEY Well bless my soul! That's right You can take it from me ma'am you'll find that respectability pays

MARGARET (*at phone*) Bryant 4253? (*Sweetly*) Is that Mr Fenton? (*Pause*) Hello Charley!

CURTAIN

The Clod

A ONE-ACT PLAY

BY LEWIS BEACH

Suggested by *The Least of These*—a
short story by DONAL HAMILTON HAINES

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CHARACTERS

THADDEUS TRASK

MARY TRASK

A NORTHERN PRIVATE

A SOUTHERN SERGEANT

A SOUTHERN PRIVATE

THE CLOD

SCENE—The kitchen of a farmhouse on the borderline between the North ern and Southern states It is ten o'clock in the evening September 1863

The back wall is broken at stage left by the projection at right angles of a partially enclosed staircase the four steps leading to the landing cut into the room Underneath the enclosed part of the stairway a cubby hole in front of it a small table which partially hides the door To the left of the table a kitchen chair A door leading to the yard is the center of the un broken wall back To the right of the door a cupboard to the left a small cooking stove Two windows in the right wall Between them a bench on which a pail and a tin dipper stand Above the bench a towel hanging on a nail and above the towel a double barrelled shotgun suspended on two pegs Well downstage left a closed door leading to a second room In the center of the kitchen a large table straight backed chairs to the right and left of it A lighted candle on this table (Right and left are the actors right and left)

The moon shines into the room through the windows but at no time is the kitchen brightly lighted The characters appear as silhouettes except when they stand near the candle or the lantern and then the lights throw huge shadows on the roughly plastered walls When the door back is opened one sees a bit of the farmyard desolate even in the moonlight

As the curtain rises, THADDEUS TRASK a man of sixty odd years short and thick set slow in speech and action yet in perfect health sits at the left of the center table He is pressing tobacco into his corn cob pipe He lights it with the candle After a moment MARY TRASK a tired emaciated woman whose years equal her husband's enters from the yard carrying a heavy pail of water and a lighted lantern She puts the pail on the bench and hangs the lantern above it then crosses to the stove

MARY Ain't got wood nough fer breakfast Thad

THADDEUS I'm too tired t go out now Wait til mornin (Pause MARY lays the fire in the stove) Did I tell yuh that old man Reed saw three Southern troopers pass his house this mornin?

MARY (takes coffee pot from stove, crosses to bench fills pot with water) I wish them soldiers would git out o the neighborhood Whenever I see em passin, I have t steady

myself gamst somethin or I'd fall I couldn't hardly breathe yesterday when them Southerners came after fodder I'd died if they'd spoke t me

THADDEUS Yuh needn't be afraid o Northern soldiers

MARY (carries coffee pot to stove) I hate em all—Union or Southern I can't make head or tail t what all this fightin's 'bout An I don't care who wins so long as they git through an them soldiers stop stealin our corn an potatoes

THADDEUS Yuh can't hardly blame em if they're hungry, ken yuh?

MARY It ain't right that they should steal from us poor folk (*Lifts a huge gunny sack of potatoes from the table and begins setting the table for breakfast getting knives forks spoons plates cups and saucers—two of each—from the cupboard*) We have hard'nough times t' make things meet now. I ain't set down onct today cep't fer meals. An when I think o' the work I got t' do t'morrow, I ought t' been in bed hours ago.

THADDEUS I'd help if I could, but it ain't my fault if the Lord seed fit t' lay me up so. I'm always a-ahin' (*Rises lazily*) Yuh better try an' take things easy t'morrow.

MARY It's well enough t' say, but them apples is got t' be picked an' the rest o' the potatoes sorted. If I could sleep at night, it'd be all right, but with them soldiers bout, I can't.

THADDEUS (*crosses right fondly handles his gun*) Golly, wish I'd see a flock o' birds.

MARY (*nervously*) I'd rather go without than hear yuh fire. I wish yuh didn't keep it loaded.

THADDEUS Yuh know I ain't got time t' stop an' load when I see the birds. They don't wait fer yuh (*Hangs gun on wall drops into his chair dejectedly*) Them pigs has got t' be butchered.

MARY Wait 'til I git a chance t' go t' sister's. I can't stand it t' hear 'em squeal.

THADDEUS (*pulling off his boots—*

grunting meanwhile) Best go soon then, 'cause they's fat as they'll ever be an' there ain't no use in wastin' feed on 'em. (*Pause rises*) Ain't yuh most ready fer bed?

MARY Go on up. (*THADDEUS takes the candle in one hand his boots in the other and climbs the stairs MARY speaks when he reaches the landing*) An' Thad, try not t' snore t'night.

THADDEUS Poke me if I do. (*Dis appears*)

(*MARY fills the kettle with water and puts it on the stove closes the door back takes the lantern from the wall and tries twice before she succeeds in blowing it out. Puts the lantern on the table before the cubby hole. Slowly drags herself up the stairs pausing a moment on the top step for breath before she disappears. There is a silence. Then the door back is opened a trifle and a man's hand is seen. Cautiously the door is opened wide and a young Northern private stands silhouetted on the threshold. He wears a dirty uniform and a bloody bandage is tied about his head. He is wounded, sick and exhausted. He stands at the door a moment listening intently then hastily moves to the center table looking for food. He bumps against a chair and mutters an oath. Finding nothing on the table he hurries to the cupboard. Suddenly the galloping of horses is heard in the distance. The NORTHERNER starts then rushes to the window nearer the audience. For a moment the sound ceases then it begins again growing gradually louder and louder. The NORTHERNER hurries into the room at the left. Horses and voices are heard in the yard, and almost immediately*

heavy thundering knocks sound on the door back The men at the door grow impatient and push the door open A large powerfully built SOUTHERN SERGEANT and a smaller younger trooper of the same army enter THADDEUS appears on the stairs carrying a candle)

SERGEANT (*to THADDEUS not unkindly*) Sorry my friend but you were so darn slow 'bout openin the door that we had to walk in Has there been a Northern soldier round here today?

THADDEUS (*timidly*) I ain't seed one (*Comes down the stairs*)

SERGEANT Have you been here all day?

THADDEUS I ain't stirred from the place

SERGEANT Call the rest of your family down

THADDEUS My wife's all there is (*Goes to foot of stairs and calls loudly and excitedly*) Mary! Mary! Come down Right off!

SERGEANT You better not lie to me or it'll go tough with you

THADDEUS I swear I ain't seed no one (*MARY comes downstairs slowly She is all atremble*) Say Mary you was here——

SERGEANT Keep still man I'll do the talkin (*To MARY*) You were here at the house all day? (*MARY is very frightened and embarrassed but after a moment manages to nod her head slowly*) You didn't take a trip down to the store? (*MARY shakes her head slowly*) Haven't you got a tongue?

MARY (*with difficulty*) Y e s

SERGEANT Then use it The Northern soldier who came here a while ago was pretty badly wounded wasn't he?

MARY I—I—no one's been here

SERGEANT Come come woman don't lie (*MARY shows a slight sign of anger*) He had a bad cut in his forehead and you felt sorry for him and gave him a bite to eat

MARY (*haltingly*) No one's been near the house t day

SERGEANT (*trying a different tone*) We're not going to hurt him woman He's a friend of ours We want to find him and put him in a hospital don't we Dick? (*Turning to his companion*)

DICK He's sick and needs to go to bed for a while

MARY He ain't here

SERGEANT What do you want to lie for?

MARY (*quickly*) I ain't lyin I ain't seed no soldier (*She stands rooted to the spot where she stopped when she came downstairs Her eyes are still fixed on the SERGEANT*)

SERGEANT I reckon you know what'll happen if you are hidin the spy

THADDEUS There ain't no one here We both been here all day an there couldn't no one come without our knowin it What would they want round here anyway?

SERGEANT Well search the place
Dick

MARY (*quickly*) Yuh ain't got no—

SERGEANT (*sharply*) What's that
woman?

MARY There ain't no one here an
yer keepin' us from our sleep

SERGEANT Your sleep? This is an
affair of life and death. Get us a lan-
tern. (THADDEUS moves to the small
table and lights the lantern with the
candle which he holds in his hand.
He gives the lantern to the SER-
GEANT. The SERGEANT notices the
door to the cubby hole.) Ha! Tryin'
to hide the door, are you, by puttin'
a table in front of it? You can't fool
me. (To THADDEUS) Pull the table
away and let's see what's behind
the door.

THADDEUS It's a cubby hole an' ain't
been opened in years.

SERGEANT (*sternly and emphatical-
ly*) I said to open the door. (THAD-
DEUS sets the candle on the larger
table, moves the smaller table to the
right, and opens the door to the
cubby hole. MARY is angry. The
SERGEANT takes a long barreled re-
volver from his belt and peers into
the cubby hole. Returning his re-
volver to his belt.) We're gonn'
tear this place to pieces 'til we find
him. You might just as well hand
him over now.

MARY There ain't no one here.

SERGEANT All right. Now we'll see
Dick, you stand guard at the door.
(DICK goes to the door back, and
stands gazing out into the night—
his back to the audience. To THAD-

DEUS) Come along, man. I'll have
to look at the upstairs. (To MARY)
You sit down in that chair. (Points
to chair at right of center table
and feels for a sufficiently strong
threat.) Don't you stir or I'll—
I'll set fire to your house. (To THAD-
DEUS) Go on ahead.

(THADDEUS and the SERGEANT go
upstairs. MARY sinks lifelessly into
the chair. She is the picture of fear.
She sits facing left. Suddenly she
leans forward. She opens her eyes
wide and draws her breath sharply.
She opens her mouth as though she
would scream, but makes no sound.
The NORTHERNER has opened the
door. He enters slowly and cau-
tiously, his gun pointed at MARY.
DICK cannot see him because of the
jog in the wall. MARY only stares in
bewilderment at the NORTHERNER
as he, with eyes fixed appealingly
on her, opens the door to the cubby
hole and crawls inside.)

DICK Woman!

MARY (*almost with a cry, thinking
that DICK has seen the NORTHERN-
ER*) Yes.

DICK Have you got an apple handy?
I'm starved.

(MARY rises and moves to the cup-
board. The SERGEANT and THAD-
DEUS come downstairs. The SER-
GEANT, seeing that MARY is not
where he left her, looks about rapid-
ly and discovers her at the cup-
board.)

SERGEANT Here, what did I tell you
I'd do if you moved from that chair?

MARY (*terrified*) Oh, I didn't—I
only—he wanted—

DICK It's all right, Sergeant. I asked
her to get me an apple.

SERGEANT Take this lantern and search the barn (*DICK takes the lantern from the SERGEANT and goes out back To THADDEUS*) Come in here with me (*The SERGEANT picks up the candle He and THADDEUS move toward the door left As though in a stupor MARY starts to follow*) Sit down! (*MARY drops into the chair at the right of the table The SERGEANT and THADDEUS go into the room left They can be heard moving furniture about MARY sees a pin on the floor She stoops picks it up and fastens it in her belt The SERGEANT and THADDEUS return*) If I find him now after all the trouble you've given me you know what'll happen There's likely to be two dead men and a woman instead of only the Yankee

DICK (*bounding into the room*) Sergeant!

SERGEANT What is it? (*DICK hurries to the SERGEANT and says something to him in a low voice The SERGEANT smiles*) Now my good people how did that horse get here?

THADDEUS What horse?

DICK There's a horse in the barn with a saddle on his back I swear he's been ridden lately

THADDEUS (*amazed*) There is?

SERGEANT You know it (*To MARY*) Come woman who drove that horse here?

MARY (*silent for a moment her eyes on the floor*) I don't know I didn't hear nothin

THADDEUS (*moving toward the door*) Let me go an see

SERGEANT (*pushing THADDEUS back*) No you don't You two have done enough to justify the harshest measures Show us the man's hiding place

THADDEUS If there's anybody here he's come in the night without our knowin' it I tell yuh I didn't see anybody an' she didn't an' —

SERGEANT (*has been watching MARY*) Where is he?
(*His tone makes THADDEUS jump There is a pause during which MARY seems trying to compose herself Then slowly she lifts her eyes and looks at the SERGEANT*)

MARY There ain't nobody in the house cept us two

SERGEANT (*to DICK*) Did you search all the out buildings?

DICK Yes There's not a trace of him except the horse

SERGEANT (*wiping the perspiration from his face speaks with apparent deliberation at first but becomes very emphatic*) He didn't have much of a start of us and I think he was wounded A farmer down the road said he heard hoof beats The man the other side of you heard nothin' and the horse is in your barn (*Slowly draws his revolver and points it at THADDEUS*) There are ways of making people confess,

THADDEUS (*covering his face with his hands*) For God's sake don't I know that horse looks bad but as I live I ain't heard a sound or seen anybody I'd give the man up in a minute if he was here

SERGEANT (*lowering his gun*) Yes.

I guess you would You wouldn't want me to hand you and your wife over to our army to be shot down like dogs (MARY *shivers* SERGEANT *swings round sharply and points the gun at MARY*) Your wife knows where he's hid

MARY (*breaking out in irritating rasping voice*) I'm sure I wish I did I'd tell yuh quick an' git yuh out o' here Tain't no fun fer me t' have yuh prowlin' all over my house trackin' it up with yer dirty boots Yuh ain't got no right t' torment me like this Lord knows how I'll git my day's work done if I can't have my sleep out

SERGEANT (*has been gazing at her in astonishment lowers his gun*) Good God! Nothing but her own petty existence (*In different voice to MARY*) I'll have to ask you to get us some breakfast We're famished (*With relief but showing some anger* MARY *turns to the stove She lights the fire and puts more coffee in the pot*) Come Dick we better give our horses some water They're all tired out (*In lower voice*) The man isn't here If he were he couldn't get away while we're in the yard (*To THADDEUS*) Get us a pail to give the horses some water in (*Sees the pails on the bench Picks one of them up and moves to ward the door*)

MARY That ain't the horses' pail

SERGEANT (*to THADDEUS*) Come along You can help

MARY (*louder*) That's the drinkin' water pail

SERGEANT That's all right
(*The SERGEANT THADDEUS and*

DICK—*carrying the lantern—go out back* MARY *needs more wood for the fire, so she follows in a moment* When she has disappeared the NORTHERNER *drags himself from the cubby hole* MARY *returns with an armful of wood*)

MARY (*sees the NORTHERNER Shows no sympathy for him in this speech nor during the entire scene*) Yuh git back! Them soldiers'll see yuh

NORTHERNER Some water Quick (*Falls into chair at left of table*) It was so hot in there

MARY (*gives him water in the dipper*) Don't yuh faint here! If them soldiers git yuh they'll kill me an' Thad Hustle an' git back in that cubby hole (*Turns quickly to the stove*)

(*The NORTHERNER drinks the water puts the dipper on the table Then summoning all his strength rises and crosses to MARY He touches her on the sleeve MARY is so startled that she jumps and utters a faint cry*)

NORTHERNER Be still or they'll hear you How are you going to get me out of here?

MARY Yuh git out! Why did yuh come here a bringin' me all this extra work an' maybe death?

NORTHERNER I couldn't go any farther My horse and I were ready to drop Won't you help me?

MARY No I won't I don't know who yuh are or nothin' 'bout yuh cept that them men want t' ketch yuh (*In a changed tone of curi*

osity) Did yuh steal somethin from em?

NORTHERNER Don't you understand? Those men belong to the Confederacy, and I'm a Northerner. They've been chasing me all day (*Pulling a bit of crumpled paper from his breast*) They want this paper. If they get it before tomorrow morning it will mean the greatest disaster that's ever come to the Union army.

MARY (*with frank curiosity*) Was it yuh rode by yesterday?

NORTHERNER Don't you see what you can do? Get me out of here and away from those men and you'll have done more than any soldier could do for the country—for *your* country.

MARY I ain't got no country. Me an Thad's only got this farm. Thad's a lin', an I do most the work an—

NORTHERNER The lives of thirty thousand men hang by a thread. I must save them. And you must help me!

MARY I don't know nothin 'bout yuh, an I don't know what yer talkin 'bout.

NORTHERNER Only help me get away.

MARY (*angrily*) No one ever helped me or Thad. I lift no finger in this business. Why yuh come here in the first place is beyond me—sneakin in our house spoilin our well-earned sleep. If them soldiers ketch yuh they'll kill me an Thad. My be you didn't know that.

NORTHERNER What's your life and your husband's compared to thirty thousand? I haven't any money or I'd give it to yuh.

MARY I don't want yer money.

NORTHERNER What do you want?

MARY I want yuh t git out. I don't care what happens t yuh. Only git out o here.

NORTHERNER I can't with the Southerners in the yard. They'd shoot me like a dog. Besides, I've got to have my horse.

MARY (*with naive curiosity*) What kind o lookin horse is it?

NORTHERNER (*dropping into the chair at left of center table in disgust and despair*) Oh God! If I a only turned in at the other farm I might have found people with red blood. (*Pulls out his gun and hopelessly opens the empty chamber*.)

MARY (*alarmed*) What yuh goin t do with that gun?

NORTHERNER Don't be afraid.

MARY I'd call em if I wasn't—

NORTHERNER (*leaping to the wall left and bracing himself against it*) Go call them in. Save your poor skin and your husband's if you can. Call them in. You can't save yourself. (*Laughs hysterically*) You can't save your miserable skin. Cause if they get me, and don't shoot you, I will.

MARY (*leaning against the left side of the table for support in agony*) Oh!

NORTHERNER You see? You've got to help me whether you want to or not

MARY (*feeling absolutely caught*) I ain't done nothin I don't see why yuh an them others come here a threatenin t shoot me I don't want nothin I don't want t do nothin I jest want yuh all t git out o here an leave me an Thad t go t sleep Oh I don't know what t do Yuh got me in a corner where I can't move (*Passes her hand back along the table Touches the dipper accidentally and it falls to the floor Screams at the sound*)

NORTHERNER (*leaping toward her*) Now you've done it They'll be here in a minute You can't give me up They'll shoot me if you do They'll shoot (*Hurries up the stairs and disappears*)
(MARY *stands beside the table trembling terribly* The SERGEANT DICK and THADDEUS come running in)

SERGEANT What did you yell for? (MARY *does not answer* He *seizes her by the arm*) Answer!

MARY I knocked the dipper off the table It scared me

SERGEANT (*dropping wearily into chair at left of center table*) Well don't drop our breakfast Put it on the table We're ready

MARY (*stands looking at the SERGEANT*) It ain't finished

SERGEANT (*worn out by his day's work and MARY'S stupidity, from now on absolutely brutish*) You've had time to cook a dozen meals

What did you do all the time we were in the yard?

MARY I didn't do nothin

SERGEANT You good for nothin — Get a move on and give us some thing fit to eat Don't try to get rid of any left overs on us If you do you'll suffer for it (MARY *stands looking at him*) Don't you know anything you brainless farm drudge? Hurry I said (MARY *picks up the dipper and turns to the stove* THADDEUS *sits in the chair at left of smaller table*)

DICK What a night! My stomach's as hollow as these people's heads (*Takes towel which hangs above the bench and wipes the barrel of his gun with it*)

MARY That's one of my best towels

DICK Can't help it

SERGEANT Tend to the breakfast That's enough for you to do at one time (DICK *puts his gun on the smaller table and sits at the right of the larger* Then the SERGEANT *speaks, quietly*) I don't see how he gave us the slip

DICK He knew we were after him drove his horse in here, and went on afoot Clever scheme I must admit

THADDEUS (*endeavoring to get them into conversation*) Have yuh rid far t night, Mist'ers?

DICK (*shortly*) Far enough

THADDEUS Twenty miles or so?

DICK Perhaps

THADDEUS How long yuh been chasin the critter?

SERGEANT Oh shut up! Don't you see we don't want to talk to you? Take hold and hurry woman My patience's at an end
(MARY puts a loaf of bread some fried eggs and a coffee pot on the table)

MARY There! I hope yer satisfied
(DICK and the SERGEANT pull up their chairs and begin to eat)

SERGEANT Is this all we get? Come it won't do you any good to be stingy

MARY It's all I got

SERGEANT It isn't a mouthful for a chuckadee! Give us some butter

MARY There ain't none

SERGEANT No butter on a farm? God the way you lie

MARY I——

SERGEANT Shut up!

DICK Have you got any cider?

SERGEANT Don't ask She and the man probably drank themselves stupid on it (Throws fork on floor) I never struck such a place in my life Get me another fork How do you expect me to eat with that bent thing? (MARY stoops with difficulty and picks up the fork Gets another from the cupboard and gives it to the SERGEANT) Now give me some salt Don't you know that folks eat it on eggs? (MARY crosses to the cup

board mistakes the pepper for the salt and puts it on the table SERGEANT sprinkles pepper on his food) I said salt woman (Spelling) S c l t Salt! Salt! (MARY gets the salt and gives it to the SERGEANT Almost ready to drop she drags herself to the window nearer the back and leans against it watching the SOUTHERNERS like a hunted animal THADDEUS is nodding in the corner The SERGEANT and DICK go on devouring the food The former pours the coffee puts his cup to his lips takes one swallow then jumping to his feet and upsetting his chair as he does so he hurls his cup to the floor Bellowing and pointing to the fluid trickling on the floor) Have you tried to poison us you God damn hag?

(MARY screams and the faces of the men turn white It is the cry of an animal goaded beyond endurance)

MARY (screeching) Break my cup? Call my coffee poison? Call me a hag will yuh? I'll learn yuh! I'm a woman but yer drivin me crazy (She has snatched the gun from the wall and pointed it at the SERGEANT Fires)

(The SERGEANT falls to the floor MARY keeps on screeching DICK rushes for his gun)

THADDEUS Mary! Mary!

MARY (aiming at DICK and firing) I ain't a hag I'm a woman but yer killin me

(DICK falls just as he reaches his gun THADDEUS is in the corner with his hands over his ears The NORTHERNER stands on the stairs MARY continues to pull the trigger of the empty gun The NORTHERNER is motionless for a moment then he goes to THADDEUS and shakes him)

NORTHERNER Go get my horse
 Quick! (THEADDEUS hurries out The
 NORTHERNER turns to MARY and
 speaks with great fervor She gazes
 at him but does not understand a
 word he says) I m ashamed of what
 I said The whole country will hear
 of this and you (He takes her hand
 and presses it to his lips then turns
 and hurries out of the house)

(MARY still holds the gun in her
 hand She pushes a strand of gray
 hair back from her face and begins
 to pick up the fragments of the
 broken cup)

MARY (in dead flat tone) I ll have
 t drink out the tin cup now
 (The hoof beats of the NORTHERN
 ER S horse are heard)

CURTAIN

Aria Da Capo

A PLAY

BY EDNA ST VINCENT MILLAY

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**Application for amateur dramatic rights must be made to Walter H Baker
Co 178 Tremont Street Boston, Mass**

CHARACTERS

PIERROT

COLUMBINE

COTHURNUS *masque of tragedy*

THYRSIS *shepherd*

CORYDON *shepherd*

ARIA DA CAPO

SCENE—A Stage The curtain rises on a stage set for a Harlequinade a merry black and white interior Directly behind the footlights and running parallel with them is a long table covered with a gay black and white cloth on which is spread a banquet At the opposite ends of this table seated on delicate thin legged chairs with high backs are PIERROT and COLUMBINE dressed according to the tradition excepting that PIERROT is in lilac and COLUMBINE in pink They are dining

COLUMBINE

Pierrot a macaroon!

I cannot live
Without a macaroon!

COLUMBINE

Pierrot don't you love
Me now?

PIERROT

My only love

You are so intense It is Tues-
day Columbiner—
I'll kiss you if it's Tuesday

PIERROT

La what a woman!—
How should I know?
Pour me some wine I'll tell you
presently

COLUMBINE

It is Wednesday

If you must know Is this my
artichoke
Or yours?

COLUMBINE

Pierrot, do you know I think you
drink too much

PIERROT

Ah Columbine—as if it
mattered!

Wednesday Will it be Tues-
day then tomorrow
By any chance?

PIERROT

Yes I dare say I do Or else
too little
It's hard to tell You see I am always
wanting
A little more than what I have—or
else
A little less There's something
wrong My dear
How many fingers have you?

COLUMBINE

Tomorrow will be—

Pierrot
That isn't funny!

COLUMBINE

PIERROT

I thought it rather nice

Well let us drink some wine and
lose our heads
And love each other

La, indeed

How should I know?—It always
takes me one hand
To count the other with It's too con-
fusing
Why?

PIERROT
Why?—I am a student
Columbine
And search into all matters

COLUMBINE
La indeed?—
Count them yourself then!

PIERROT
No Or rather nay
Tis of no consequence I am
become
A painter suddenly—and you im-
press me—
Ah yes!—six orange bulls eyes
four green pin wheels
And one magenta jelly roll—the
title
As follows *Woman Taking in
Cheese from Fire Escape*

COLUMBINE
Well I like that! So that is all
I ve meant
To you!

PIERROT
Hush! All at once I
am become
A p anist I will image you in sound
On a new scale without tonal
ity
Vivace senza tempo senza tutto
Title *Uptown Express at Six O -
Clock*
Pour me a drink

COLUMBINE
Pierrot you work too hard
You need a rest Come on out into
the garden
And sing me something sad

PIERROT
Don t stand so near me!
I am become a socialist I love
Humanity but I hate people Col-
umbine,

Put on your mittens chld your
hands are cold

COLUMBINE
My hands are *not* colr

PIERROT
Oh I am sure they are
And you must have a shawl to wrap
about you
And sit by the fire

COLUMBINE
Why I'll do no such thing!
I m hot as a spoon in a tea cup!

PIERROT
Columbine
I m a philanthropist I know I am
Because I feel so restless Do not
scream
Or it will be the worse for you!

COLUMBINE
Pierrot
My vinaigrette I cannot *live* with
out
My vinaigrette!

PIERROT
My only love you are
So fundamental! How would
you like to be
An actress Columbine?—I am be-
come
Your manager

COLUMBINE
Why, Pierrot I can t act

PIERROT
Can t act! Can t act! La, listen to the
woman!
What s that to do with the price of
furs?—You re blonde
Are you not?—You have no educa-
tion have you?—
Can t act! You under rate yourself
my dear!

COLUMBINE

Yes I suppose I do

And women with their breasts in
front of them!—*Zut and eh!* Where does one go
from here!

PIERROT

As for the rest

I'll teach you how to cry and how
to dieAnd other little tricks and the house
will love you

You'll be a star by five o'clock

That is

If you will let me pay for your apart-
ment

COLUMBINE

Here's a persimmon love You al-
ways liked them

PIERROT

I am become a critic there
is nothing I can enjoy How-
ever set it aside

I'll eat it between meals

COLUMBINE

Let you?—well that's a good one!

Hal Hal Hal

But why?

COLUMBINE

Pierrot do you know

Sometimes I think you're making
fun of me

PIERROT

But why?—well as to that

my dear

I cannot say It's just a matter of
form

PIERROT

My love by yon black moon, you
wrong us both

COLUMBINE

Pierrot, I'm getting

tired of caviar

And peacocks livers Isn't there
something elseThat people eat?—some humble
vegetable

That grows in the ground?

COLUMBINE

There isn't a sign of a moon
Pierrot

PIERROT

Of course not

There never was Moon's just a
word to swear byMutton! —now *there's* a thing you
can lay the hands on,And set the tooth in! Listen Colum-
bineI always lied about the moon and
you

Food is my only lust

PIERROT

Well, there are mushrooms

COLUMBINE

Mushrooms!

That's so! I had forgotten

mushrooms mushrooms

I cannot *live* with How do you
like this gown?

COLUMBINE

Well eat it then,

For heaven's sake and stop your
silly noise!I haven't heard the clock tick for 25
hour

PIERROT

Not much I'm tired of gowns that
have the waist lineAbout the waist and the hem
around the bottom—

PIERROT

It's ticking all the same If you were
a fly

You would be dead by now And if I
were a parrot
I could be talking for a thousand
years!

(*Enters COTHURNUS*)

PIERROT

Hello what's this for God's sake?
—What's the matter?
Say whadda you mean?—get off
the stage my friend
And pinch yourself—you're walk-
ing in your sleep!

COTHURNUS

I never sleep

PIERROT

Well anyhow clear out
You don't belong on here Wait for
your own scene!
Whadda you think this is—a dress
rehearsal?

COTHURNUS

Sir I am tired of waiting I
will wait
No longer

PIERROT

Well but what are you
going to do?
The scene is set for me!

COTHURNUS

True sir yet I
Can play the scene

PIERROT

Your scene is down for
later!

COTHURNUS

That too is true sir but I
play it now

PIERROT

Oh, very well!—Anyway
I am tired
Of black and white At least, I think
I am

(*Exit COLUMBINE*)

Yes I am sure I am I know what
I'll do!—

I'll go and strum the moon that's
what I'll do

Unless perhaps you never can
tell I may be

You know tired of the moon Well
anyway

I'll go find Columbine And
when I find her

I will address her thus *Eh  Pier-
rettel!*—

There's something in that

(*Exit PIERROT*)

COTHURNUS

You Thyrsis! Corydon!
Where are you?

THYRSIS

Sir we are in our dressing
room!

COTHURNUS

Come out and do the scene

CORYDON

You are mocking us!—
The scene is down for later

COTHURNUS

That is true
But we will play it now I am the
scene

(*Sits himself on high place in
back of stage Enter CORY-
DON and THYRSIS*)

CORYDON

Sir we were counting on this
little hour
We said Here is an hour—in
which to think
A mighty thought, and sing a tri-
fling song,
And look at nothing —And, be-
hold! the hour

Even as we spoke was over and the
act begun
Under our feet!

*pillows and bolsters in place
of rocks)*

THYRSIS

Sir we are not in the
fancy
To play the play We had thought to
play it later

CORYDON

Besides this is the setting
for a farce
Our scene requires a wall, we can
not build
A wall of tissue paper!

THYRSIS

We cannot act
A tragedy with comic properties!

COTHURNUS

Try it and see I think you'll find you
can
One wall is like another And re-
garding
The matter of your insufficient wood
The important thing is that you
speak the lines
And make the gestures Wherefore
I shall remain
Throughout, and hold the prompt
book Are you ready?

CORYDON THYRSIS

(Sorrowfully)
Sir we are always ready

COTHURNUS

Play the play!

(CORYDON and THYRSIS move
the table and chairs to one
side out of the way and seat
themselves in a half reclin-
ing position on the floor left
of the center of the stage
propped up by crepe paper

THYRSIS

How gently in the silence,
Corydon
Our sheep go up the bank They
crop a grass
That's yellow where the sun is out,
and black
Where the clouds drag their shad-
ows
Have you noticed
How steadily yet with what a slant-
ing eye
They graze?

CORYDON

As if they thought of other
things
What say you Thyrsis do they only
question
Where next to pull?—Or do their
far minds draw them
Thus vaguely north of west and
south of east?

THYRSIS

One cannot say The black
lamb wears its burdocks
As if they were a garland—have
you noticed?—
Purple and white—and drinks the
bitten grass
As if it were a wine

CORYDON

I've noticed that
What say you Thyrsis, shall we
make a song
About a lamb that thought himself a
shepherd?

THYRSIS

Why yes!—that is why—no (I
have forgotten
My line)

COTHURNUS

(Prompting)

"I know a game worth two of that

PIERROT

(Off stage)

Ehé Pierrettel

THYRSIS

Oh yes I know a game worth
two of that
Let's gather rocks and build a wall
between us
And say that over there belongs to
me
And over here to you!

CORYDON

Why—very well
And say you may not come upon my
side
Unless I say you may!

THYRSIS

Nor you on mine!
And if you should, 'twould be the
worse for you!
*(They weave a wall of colored
crêpe paper ribbons from the
center front to the center
back of the stage fastening
the ends to COLUMBINE'S
chair in front and to PIER
ROT'S chair in the back)*

CORYDON

Now there's a wall a man may see
across
But not attempt to scale

THYRSIS

An excellent wall

CORYDON

Come let us separate
and sit alone
A little while and lay a plot where
by
We may outdo each other
*(They seat themselves on op-
posite sides of the wall)*

COLUMBINE

(Off stage)

My name is Columbine! Leave me
alone!

THYRSIS

(Coming up to the wall)

Corydon after all and in spite of
the fact
I started it myself I do not like this
So very much What is the sense of
saying
I do not want you on my side the
wall?
It is a silly game I'd much prefer
Making the little song you spoke of
making
About the lamb you know that
thought himself
A shepherd!—what do you say?
(Pause)

CORYDON

(At wall)

I have forgotten
The line

COTHURNUS

(Prompting)

How do I know this isn't a trick

CORYDON

Oh yes How do I know this
isn't a trick
To get upon my land?

THYRSIS

Oh Corydon
You *know* it's not a trick I do not
like
The game, that's all Come over
here or let me
Come over there

CORYDON

It is a clever trick
To get upon my land
(*Seats himself as before*)

THYRSIS

Oh very well!
(*Seats himself as before*)
(*To himself*)
I think I never knew a sillier game

CORYDON

(*Coming to wall*)
Oh Thyrsis just a minute!—all the
water
Is on your side the wall and the
sheep are thirsty
I hadn't thought of that

THYRSIS

Oh hadn't you?

CORYDON

Why what do you mean?

THYRSIS

What do I mean?—I mean
That I can play a game as well as
you can
And if the pool is on my side it's on
My side that's all

CORYDON

You mean you'd let the sheep
Go thirsty?

THYRSIS

Well they're not my sheep
My sheep
Have water enough

CORYDON

Your sheep! You are mad, to call
them
Yours—mine—they are all one
flock! Thyrsis you can't mean
To keep the water from them, just
because

They happened to be grazing over
here
Instead of over there when we set
the wall up?

THYRSIS

Oh can't I?—wait and see!—and if
you try
To lead them over here you'll wish
you hadn't!

CORYDON

I wonder how it happens
all the water
Is on your side I'll say you
had an eye out
For lots of little things my innocent
friend
When I said 'Let us make a song
and you said
I know a game worth two of that!'

COLUMBINE

(*Off stage*)
Do you know I think you must be
getting old
Or fat or something—stupid any-
way!—
Can't you put on some other kind of
collar?

THYRSIS

You know as well as I do,
Corydon
I never thought of anything of the
kind
Don't you?

CORYDON

I do not.

THYRSIS

Don't you?

CORYDON

Oh, I suppose so
Thyrsis let's drop this—what do
you say?—I's only

A game, you know we seem
to be forgetting
It's only a game a pretty seri-
ous game
It's getting to be when one of us is
willing
To let the sheep go thirsty for the
sake of it

THYRSIS

I know it, Corydon
(*They reach out their arms to
each other across the wall*)

COTHURNUS

(*Prompting*) But how do
I know?

THYRSIS

Oh yes But how do I know
this isn't a trick
To water your sheep and get the
laugh on me?

CORYDON

You can't know that's the difficult
thing about it
Of course—you can't be sure You
have to take
My word for it And I know just how
you feel
But one of us has to take a risk or
else
Why don't you see?—the game goes
on forever—
It's terrible when you stop to think
of it
Oh Thyrsis now for the first time I
feel
This wall is actually a wall a thing
Come up between us shutting me
away
From you I do not know you
any more!

THYRSIS

No don't say that! Oh Corydon,
I'm willing

To drop it all if you will! Come on
over
And water your sheep! It is an ugly
game
I hate it from the first How
did it start?

CORYDON

I do not know I do not know
I think
I am afraid of you!—you are a
stranger!
I never set eyes on you before!
Come over
And water my sheep indeed!—
They'll be more thirsty
Than they are now before I bring
them over
Into your land and have you mix-
ing them up
With yours and calling them yours,
and trying to keep them!
(*Enter COLUMBINE*)

COLUMBINE

(*To COTHURNUS*)
Glummy I want my hat

THYRSIS

Take it and go

COLUMBINE

Take it and go indeed! Is
it my hat
Or isn't it? Is this my scene or not?
Take it and go! Really you know
you two
Are awfully funny!
(*Exit COLUMBINE*)

THYRSIS

Corydon my friend,
I'm going to leave you now and
whittle me
A pipe or sing a song or go to sleep
When you have come to your senses
let me know
(*Goes back to where he has*)

been sitting hes down and sleeps)
 (CORYDON in going back to where he has been sitting stumbles over bowl of colored confetti and colored paper ribbons)

CORYDON

Why what is this?—Red stones—
 and purple stones—
 And stones stuck full of gold!—The
 ground is full
 Of gold and colored stones!
 I m glad the wall
 Was up before I found them!—
 Otherwise
 I should have had to share them As
 it is
 They all belong to me Un
 less—

*(He goes to wall and digs up
 and down the length of it to
 see if there are jewels on the
 other side)*

None here—

None here—none here— They all
 belong to me!
(Sits)

THYRSIS

(Awakening)

How curious! I thought the little
 black lamb
 Came up and licked my hair! I saw
 the wool
 About its neck as plain as anything!
 It must have been a dream The lit
 tle black lamb
 Is on the other side of the wall, I m
 sure

*(Goes to wall and looks over
 CORYDON is seated on the
 ground tossing the confetti
 up into the air and catching
 it)*

Hello, what s that you ve got there,
 Corydon?

CORYDON

Jewels

THYRSIS

Jewels?—And where did you ever
 get them?

CORYDON

Oh over here

THYRSIS

You mean to say you found
 them
 By digging around in the ground for
 them?

CORYDON

(Unpleasantly)

No Thyrsis

By digging down for water for my
 sheep

THYRSIS

Corydon, come to the wall a minute
 will you?

I want to talk to you

CORYDON

I haven t time

I m making me a necklace of red
 stones

THYRSIS

I ll give you all the water that you
 want
 For one of those red stones—if it s
 a good one

CORYDON

Water?—what for?—what do I
 want of water?

THYRSIS

Why for your sheep

CORYDON

My sheep?—I m not a
 shepherd!

THYRSIS

Your sheep are dying
of thirst

CORYDON

Man haven't I told you
I can't be bothered with a few untidy
Brown sheep all full of burdocks?—
I'm a merchant
That's what I am!—And I set my
mind to it
I dare say I could be an emperor!
(*To himself*)
Wouldn't I be a fool to spend my
time
Watching a flock of sheep go up a
hill
When I have these to play with—
when I have these
To think about?—I can't make up
my mind
Whether to buy a city, and have a
thousand
Beautiful girls to bathe me and be
happy
Until I die or build a bridge, and
name it
The Bridge of Corydon—and be re-
membered
After I'm dead

THYRSIS

Corydon come to the wall
Won't you?—I want to tell you
something

CORYDON

Hush!
Be off! Be off! Go finish your nap
I tell you!

THYRSIS

Corydon listen If you don't want
your sheep
Give them to me

CORYDON

Be off Go finish your nap
A red one—and a blue one—and a
red one—

And a purple one—give you my
sheep did you say?—
Come come! What do you take me
for a fool?
I've a lot of thinking to do—and
while I'm thinking
The sheep might just as well be over
here
As over there A blue one—
and a red one—

THYRSIS

But they will die!

CORYDON

And a green one—and a couple
Of white ones for a change

THYRSIS

Maybe I have
Some jewels on my side

CORYDON

And another green one—
Maybe but I don't think so You
see this rock
Isn't so very wide It stops before
It gets to the wall It seems to go
quite deep
However

THYRSIS

(*With hatred*)
I see

COLUMBINE

(*Off stage*)
Look Pierrot there's the moon!

PIERROT

(*Off stage*)
Nonsense!

THYRSIS

I see

COLUMBINE

(*Off stage*)
Sing me an old song Pierrot—
Something I can remember

PIERROT

(Off stage)

Columbine
Your mind is made of crumbs—like
an escallop
Of oysters—first a layer of crumbs
and then
An oystery taste and then a layer of
crumbs

THYRSIS

I find no jewels but I wonder
what
The root of this black weed would
do to a man
If he should taste it I have
seen a sheep die
With half the stalk still drooling
from its mouth
I would be a speedy remedy I
should think,
For a festered pride and a feverish
ambition
It has a curious root I think I'll hack
it
In little pieces First I'll get
me a drink
And then I'll hack that root in little
pieces,
As small as dust, and see what the
color is
Inside
(Goes to bowl on floor)
The pool is very clear I see
A shepherd standing on the brink,
with a red cloak
About him and a black weed in his
hand
'Tis I
(Kneels and drinks)

CORYDON

(Coming to wall)

Hello what are you doing Thyrsis?

THYRSIS

Digging for gold

CORYDON

I'll give you all the gold
You want if you'll give me a bowl
of water
If you don't want too much that is
to say

THYRSIS

Ho so you've changed your mind?
—It's different
Isn't it when you want a drink your
self?

CORYDON

Of course it is

THYRSIS

Well let me see a bowl
Of water—come back in an hour
Corydon I'm busy now

CORYDON

Oh Thyrsis give me a bowl
Of water!—and I'll fill the bowl
with jewels
And bring it back!

THYRSIS

Be off I'm busy now
*(He catches sight of the weed
picks it up and looks at it
unseen by CORYDON)*
Wait!—Pick me out the finest stones
you have
I'll bring you a drink of water pres-
ently

CORYDON

*(Goes back and sits down with
the jewels before him)*

A bowl of jewels i. a lot of jewels

THYRSIS

(Chopping up the weed)

I wonder if it has a bitter taste?

CORYDON

There's sure to be a stone or two
among them

I have grown fond of pouring them
from one hand
Into the other

THYRSIS

I hope it doesn't taste
Too bitter just at first

CORYDON

A bowl of jewels
Is far too many jewels to give away
And not get back again

THYRSIS

I don't believe
He'll notice He's thirsty He'll gulp
it down
And never notice

CORYDON

There ought to be some way
To get them back again I could
give him a necklace
And snatch it back after I'd drunk
the water

I suppose why as for that, of
course a necklace

*(He puts two or three of the
colored tapes together and
tries their strength by pull-
ing them, after which he
puts them around his neck
and pulls them gently nod-
ding to himself He gets up
and goes to the wall with
the colored tapes in his
hands)*

THYRSIS *in the meantime has
poured the powdered root—
black confetti—into the pot
which contains the flower
and filled it up with wine
from the punch bowl on the
floor He comes to the wall
at the same time, holding the
bowl of poison)*

THYRSIS

Come and get your bowl of water,
Corydon

CORYDON

Ah very good!—and for such a gift
as that

I'll give you more than a bowl of
unset stones

I'll give you three long necklaces
my friend

Come closer Here they are
*(Puts the ribbons about THYR-
SIS neck)*

THYRSIS

*(Putting bowl to CORYDON'S
mouth)*

I'll hold the bowl
Until you've drunk it all.

CORYDON

Then hold it steady
For every drop you spill I'll have a
stone back
Out of this cham

THYRSIS

I shall not spill a drop
*(CORYDON drinks meanwhile
beginning to strangle THYR-
SIS)*

THYRSIS

Don't pull the string so tight

CORYDON

You're spilling the
water

THYRSIS

You've had enough—you've had
enough—stop pulling
The string so tight!

CORYDON

Why that's not tight at all
How's this?

THYRSIS

(Drops bowl)

You're strangling me! Oh Corydon!
It's only a game!—and you are
strangling me!

CORYDON

It's only a game is it?—Yet I be-
lieve

You've poisoned me in earnest!
*(Writhes and pulls the strings
tighter winding them about
THYRSIS neck)*

THYRSIS

(Dies) Corydon!

CORYDON

You've poisoned me in earnest
I feel so cold
So cold this is a very silly game
Why do we play it?—let's not play
this game

A minute more let's make a lit-
tle song
About a lamb I'm coming over
the wall

No matter what you say—I want to
be near you

*(Groping his way with arms
wide before him he strides
through the frail papers of
the wall without knowing it
and continues seeking for
the wall straight across the
stage)*

Where is the wall?

*(Gropes his way back and
stands very near THYRSIS
without knowing it he
speaks slowly)*

There isn't any wall,

I think

*(Takes a step forward his foot
touches THYRSIS body and
he falls down beside him)*

Thyrsis, where is your cloak?
—just give me

A little bit of your cloak!

*(Draws corner of THYRSIS
cloak over his shoulders fall-
across THYRSIS body and
dies)*

*(COTHURNUS closes the prompt
book with a bang arises
matter of factly comes down
stage and places the table
over the two bodies draw-
ing down the cover so that
they are hidden from any
actors on the stage but vis-
ible to the audience pushing
in their feet and hands with
his boot He then turns his
back to the audience and
claps his hands twice)*

COTHURNUS

Strike the scene!

*(Exit COTHURNUS Enter PIER-
ROT and COLUMBINE)*

PIERROT

Don't puff so Columbine!

COLUMBINE

Lord what a mess

This set is in! If there's one thing I
hate

Above everything else—even more
than getting my feet wet—

It's clutter!—He might at least have
left the scene

The way he found it don't you
say so Pierrot?

*(She picks up punch bowl
They arrange chairs as be-
fore at ends of table)*

PIERROT

Well I don't know I think it rather
diverting

The way it is

*(Yawns picks up confetti
bowl)*

Shall we begin?

COLUMBINE

(Screams)

My God!

What's that there under the table?

PIERROT

It is the bodies

Of the two shepherds from the other
play

COLUMBINE

(Slowly)

How curious to strangle him like
that

With colored paper ribbons!

PIERROT

Yes and yet

I dare say he is just as dead

(Pause Calls COTHURNUS)

Come drag these bodies out of here!

We can't

Sit down and eat with two dead
bodies lyingUnder the table! The audience
wouldn't stand for it!

COTHURNUS

(Off stage)

What makes you think so?—Pull
down the tableclothOn the other play and hide them
from the houseAnd play the farce The audience
will forget

PIERROT

That's so Give me a hand there
Columbine

(PIERROT and COLUMBINE pull
down the table cover in such
a way that the two bodies
are hidden from the house
then merrily set their bowls
back on the table draw up
their chairs and begin the
play exactly as before speak-
ing even more rapidly and
artificially)

COLUMBINE

Pierrot a macaroon—I cannot live
Without a macaroon!

PIERROT

My only love

You are so intense! Is it Tues-
day Columbine?—

I'll kiss you if it's Tuesday

(Curtains begin to close
slowly)

COLUMBINE

It is Wednesday

If you must know

artichoke

Or yours?

Is this my

PIERROT

Ah Columbine as if it

mattered!

Wednesday

Will it be Tues

day then tomorrow

By any chance?

CURTAIN

Overtones

A ONE-ACT PLAY

BY ALICE GERSTENBERG

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CHARACTERS

HARRIET *a cultured woman*

HETTY *her primitive self*

MARGARET *a cultured woman*

MAGGIE *her primitive self*

OVERTONES

TIME—*The present*

SCENE—HARRIET'S fashionable living room. The door at the back leads to the hall. In the center a tea table with a high backed chair at each side.

HARRIET'S gown is a light, jealous green. Her counterpart HETTY wears a gown of the same design but in a darker shade. MARGARET wears a gown of lavender chiffon while her counterpart MAGGIE wears a gown of the same design in purple. A purple scarf veiling her face. Chiffon is used to give a sheer effect suggesting a possibility of primitive and cultured selves merging into one woman. The primitive and cultured selves never come into actual physical contact but try to sustain the impression of mental conflict. HARRIET never sees HETTY, never talks to her but rather thinks aloud looking into space. HETTY however looks at HARRIET, talks intently and shadows her continually. The same is true of MARGARET and MAGGIE. The voices of the cultured women are affected and lingering, the voices of the primitive impulsive and more or less staccato.

When the curtain rises HARRIET is seated right of tea table busying herself with the tea things.

HETTY Harriet (There is no answer) Harriet my other self (There is no answer) My trained self you do. I'm crude and real, you are my appearance in the world.

HARRIET (Listens intently) Yes? HARRIET I am what you wish the world to believe you are.

(From behind HARRIET'S chair HETTY rises slowly) HETTY You are the part of me that has been trained.

HETTY I want to talk to you. HARRIET I am your educated self.

HARRIET Well? HETTY I am the rushing river, you are the ice over the current.

HETTY (looking at HARRIET admiringly) Oh Harriet, you are beautiful today. HARRIET I am your subtle overtones.

HARRIET Am I presentable Hetty? HETTY But together we are one woman, the wife of Charles Goodrich.

HETTY Suits me.

HARRIET I've tried to make the best of the good points. HARRIET There I disagree with you, Hetty. I alone am his wife.

HETTY My passions are deeper than yours. I can't keep on the mask as HETTY (indignantly) Harriet, how can you say such a thing!

HARRIET Certainly I am the one who flatters him I have to be the one who talks to him If I gave you a chance you would tell him at once that you dislike him

HETTY (*moving away*) I don't love him that's certain

HARRIET You leave all the fibbing to me He doesn't suspect that my calm suave manner hides your hatred Considering the amount of scheming it causes me it can safely be said that he is my husband

HETTY Oh if you love him—

HARRIET I? I haven't any feelings It isn't my business to love anybody

HETTY Then why need you object to calling him my husband?

HARRIET I resent your appropriation of a man who is managed only through the cleverness of my artifice

HETTY You may be clever enough to deceive him, Harriet but I am still the one who suffers I can't forget he is my husband I can't forget that I might have married John Caldwell

HARRIET How foolish of you to remember John just because we met his wife by chance

HETTY That's what I want to talk to you about She may be here at any moment I want to advise you about what to say to her this afternoon

HARRIET By all means tell me now and don't interrupt while she is here You have a most annoying habit of

talking to me when people are present Sometimes it is all I can do to keep my poise and appear *not* to be listening to you

HETTY Impress her

HARRIET Hetty dear is it not my custom to impress people?

HETTY I hate her

HARRIET I can't let her see that

HETTY I hate her because she married John

HARRIET Only after you had refused him

HETTY (*turning to HARRIET*) Was it my fault that I refused him?

HARRIET That's right blame me

HETTY It was your fault You told me he was too poor and never would be able to do anything in painting Look at him now known in Europe just returned from eight years in Paris famous

HARRIET It was too poor a gamble at the time It was much safer to accept Charles's money and position

HETTY And then John married Margaret within the year

HARRIET Out of spite

HETTY Freckled gauky looking thing she was too

HARRIET (*a little sadly*) Europe improved her She was stunning the other morning

HETTY Make her jealous today

HARRIET Shall I be haughty or cordial or caustic or—

HETTY Above all else you must let her know that we are rich

HARRIET Oh yes I do that quite easily now

HETTY You must put it on a bit

HARRIET Never fear

HETTY Tell her I love my husband

HARRIET My husband—

HETTY Are you going to quarrel with me?

HARRIET (*moves away*) No I have no desire to quarrel with you It is quite too uncomfortable I couldn't get away from you if I tried

HETTY (*stamping her foot and following HARRIET*) You were a stupid fool to make me refuse John I'll never forgive you—never—

HARRIET (*stopping and holding up her hand*) Don't get me all excited I'll be in no condition to meet her properly this afternoon

HETTY (*passionately*) I could choke you for robbing me of John

HARRIET (*retreating*) Don't muss me!

HETTY You don't know how you have made me suffer

HARRIET (*beginning to feel the strength of HETTY's emotion surge through her and trying to conquer it*) It is not my business to have heartaches

HETTY You're bloodless Nothing but sham—sham—while I—

HARRIET (*emotionally*) Be quiet! I can't let her see that I have been fighting with my inner self

HETTY And now after all my suffering you say it has cost you more than it has cost me to be married to Charles But it's the pain here in my heart—I've paid the price—I've paid—Charles is not your husband!

HARRIET (*trying to conquer emotion*) He is

HETTY (*follows HARRIET*) He isn't

HARRIET (*weakly*) He is

HETTY (*towering over HARRIET*) He isn't! I'll kill you!

HARRIET (*overpowered sinks into a chair*) Don't—don't you're stronger than I—you're—

HETTY Say he's mine

HARRIET He's ours

HETTY (*the telephone rings*) There she is now (*HETTY hurries to phone but HARRIET regains her supremacy*)

HARRIET (*authoritatively*) Wait! I can't let the telephone girl down there hear my real self It isn't proper (*At phone*) Show Mrs Caldwell up

HETTY I'm so excited, my heart's in my mouth

HARRIET (*at the mirror*) A nice state you've put my nerves into

HETTY Don't let her see you're nervous

HARRIET Quick put the veil on or she'll see you shining through me (HARRIET takes a scarf of chiffon that has been lying over the back of a chair and drapes it on HETTY covering her face The chiffon is the same color of their gowns but paler in shade so that it pales HETTY'S darker gown to match HARRIET'S lighter one As HETTY moves in the following scene the chiffon falls away revealing now and then the gown of deeper dye underneath)

HETTY Tell her Charles is rich and fascinating—boast of our friends make her feel she needs us

HARRIET I'll make her ask John to paint us

HETTY That's just my thought—if John paints our portrait—

HARRIET We can wear an exquisite gown—

HETTY And make him fall in love again and—

HARRIET (*schemingly*) Yes (MARGARET parts the portières back center and extends her hand MARGARET is followed by her counter part MAGGIE) Oh, Margaret I'm so glad to see you!

HETTY (*to MAGGIE*) That's a lie

MARGARET (*in superficial voice throughout*) It's enchanting to see you Harriet

MAGGIE (*in emotional voice throughout*) I'd bite you if I dared

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) Wasn't our meeting a stroke of luck?

MARGARET (*coming down left of table*) I've thought of you so often Harriet and to come back and find you living in New York

HARRIET (*coming down right of table*) Mr Goodrich has many interests here

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Flatter her

MARGARET I know Mr Goodrich is so successful

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Tell her we're rich

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) Won't you sit down?

MARGARET (*takes a chair*) What a beautiful cabinet!

HARRIET Do you like it? I'm afraid Charles paid an extravagant price

MAGGIE (*to HETTY*) I don't believe it

MARGARET (*sitting down To HARRIET*) I am sure he must have

HARRIET (*sitting down*) How well you are looking Margaret

HETTY Yes you are not There are circles under your eyes

MAGGIE (*to HETTY*) I haven't eaten since breakfast and I'm hungry

MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) How well you are looking, too

MAGGIE (*to HETTY*) You have hard

lines about your lips are you happy?
 MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Sugar is nourishing

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Don't let her know that I'm unhappy
 MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) Three please I used to drink very sweet coffee in Turkey and ever since I've—

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) Why shouldn't I look well? My life is full happy complete—
 HETTY I don't believe you were ever in Turkey

MAGGIE I wonder
 MARGARET I wasn't but it is none of your business

HETTY (*in HARRIET'S ear*) Tell her we have an automobile
 HARRIET (*pouring tea*) Have you been in Turkey? Do tell me about it

MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) My life is complete too
 MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Change the subject

MAGGIE My heart is torn with sorrow my husband cannot make a living He will kill himself if he does not get an order for a painting
 MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) You must go there You have so much taste in dress you would enjoy seeing their costumes

MARGARET (*laughs*) You must come and see us in our studio John has been doing some excellent portraits He cannot begin to fill his orders
 MAGGIE Isn't she going to pass the cake?

MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) John painted several portraits there

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Tell her we have an automobile
 HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Why don't you stop her bragging and tell her we have an automobile?

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) Do you take lemon in your tea?
 HARRIET (*offers cake across the table to MARGARET*) Cake?

MAGGIE Take cream It's more filling
 MAGGIE (*stands back of MARGARET, shadowing her as HETTY shadows HARRIET MAGGIE reaches claws out for the cake and groans with joy*)
 MAGGIE (*glaring at tea things*) No cream if you please How cozy!
 At last! (*But her claws do not touch the cake*)

MAGGIE (*glaring at tea things*) Only cakes! I could eat them all!
 MARGARET (*with a graceful nonchalant hand places cake upon her plate and bites at it slowly and delicately*) Thank you
 HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) How many lumps?

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Automobile!

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Don't seem anxious to get the order

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Follow up the costumes with the suggestion that she would make a good model for John. It isn't too early to begin getting what you came for

MARGARET (*nonchalantly*) Perhaps it isn't the gown itself but the way you wear it that pleases the eye. Some people can wear any thing with grace

MARGARET (*ignoring MAGGIE*) What delicious cake

HETTY Yes, I'm very graceful

HETTY (*excitedly to HARRIET*) There's your chance for the auto

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) You flatter me my dear

HARRIET (*nonchalantly to MARGARET*) Yes, it is good cake isn't it? There are always a great many people buying it at Harper's. I sat in my automobile fifteen minutes this morning waiting for my chauffeur to get it

MARGARET On the contrary, Harriet, I have an intense admiration for you. I remember how beautiful you were—as a girl. In fact, I was quite jealous when John was paying you so much attention

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Make her order a portrait

HETTY She is gloating because I lost him

MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) If you stopped at Harper's you must have noticed the new gowns at Henderson's. Aren't the shop windows alluring these days?

HARRIET Those were childhood days in a country town

HARRIET Even my chauffeur notices them

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) She's trying to make you feel that John was only a country boy

MAGGIE I know you have an automobile. I heard you the first time

MARGARET Most great men have come from the country. There is a fair chance that John will be added to the list

MARGARET I notice gowns now with an artist's eye as John does. The one you have on, my dear, is very paintable

HETTY I know it and I am bitterly jealous of you

HETTY Don't let her see you're anxious to be painted

HARRIET Undoubtedly he owes much of his success to you, Margaret, your experience in economy and your ability to endure hardship. Those first few years in Paris must have been a struggle

HARRIET (*nonchalantly*) Oh, it's just a little model

MAGGIE She is sneering at your poverty

MARGARET Yes we did find life difficult at first not the luxurious start a girl has who marries wealth

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Deny that you married Charles for his money
(HARRIET *deems it wise to ignore HETTY'S advice*)

MARGARET But John and I are so congenial in our tastes that we were impervious to hardship or unhappiness

HETTY (*in anguish*) Do you love each other? Is it really true?

HARRIET (*sweetly*) Did you have all the romance of starving for his art?

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) She's taunting you Get even with her

MARGARET Not for long Prince Rier soon discovered John's genius and introduced him royally to wealthy Parisians who gave him many orders

HETTY (*to MAGGIE*) Are you telling the truth or are you lying?

HARRIET If he had so many opportunities there you must have had great inducements to come back to the States

MAGGIE (*to HETTY*) We did but not the kind you think

MARGARET John became the rage among Americans traveling in France too and they simply insisted upon his coming here

HARRIET Whom is he going to paint here?

MAGGIE (*frightened*) What names dare I make up?

MARGARET (*calmly*) Just at present Miss Dorothy Ainsworth of Oregon is posing You may not know the name but she is the daughter of a wealthy miner who found gold in Alaska

HARRIET I dare say there are many Western people we have never heard of

MARGARET You must have found social life in New York very interesting Harriet after the simplicity of our home town

HETTY (*to MAGGIE*) There's no need to remind us that our beginnings were the same

HARRIET Of course Charles's family made everything delightful for me They are so well connected

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Flatter her

MARGARET I heard it mentioned yesterday that you had made yourself very popular Some one said you were very clever!

HARRIET (*pleased*) Who told you that?

MAGGIE Nobody!

MARGARET (*pleasantly*) Oh, confidences should be suspected—respected I mean They said, too, that you are gaining some reputation as a critic of art

HARRIET I make no pretences

MARGARET Are you and Mr Good-

rich interested in the same things too?

HETTY Nol

HARRIET Yes indeed Charles and I are inseparable

MAGGIE I wonder

HARRIET Do have another cake

MAGGIE (*in relief*) Oh yes (*Again her claws extend but do not touch the cake*)

MARGARET (*takes cake delicately*) I really shouldn't—after my big luncheon John took me to the Ritz and we are invited to the Bedford's for dinner—they have such a magnificent house near the drive—I really shouldn't but the cakes are so good

MAGGIE Starving!

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) More tea?

MAGGIE Yes!

MARGARET No thank you How wonderfully life has arranged itself for you Wealth position a happy marriage every opportunity to enjoy all pleasures beauty art—how happy you must be

HETTY (*in anguish*) Don't call me happy I've never been happy since I gave up John All these years without him—a future without him—no—no—I shall win him back—away from you—away from you—

HARRIET (*does not see MAGGIE pointing to cream and MARGARET stealing some*) I sometimes think it is unfair for anyone to be as happy

as I am Charles and I are just as much in love now as when we married To me he is just the dearest man in the world

MAGGIE (*passionately*) My John is I love him so much I could die for him I'm going through hunger and want to make him great and he loves me He worships me!

MARGARET (*leisurely to HARRIET*) I should like to meet Mr Goodrich Bring him to our studio John has some sketches to show Not many because all the portraits have been purchased by the subjects He gets as much as four thousand dollars now

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Don't pay that much

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) As much as that?

MARGARET It is not really too much when one considers that John is in the foremost ranks of artists today A picture painted by him now will double and treble in value

MAGGIE It's a lie He is growing weak with despair

HARRIET Does he paint all day long?

MAGGIE No he draws advertisements for our bread

MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) When you and your husband come to see us, telephone first—

MAGGIE Yes so he can get the advertisements out of the way

MARGARET Otherwise you might

arrive while he has a sitter and John refuses to let me disturb him then

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Don't seem too eager

HETTY Make her ask for an order

HARRIET And yet if he charges only a thousand one might consider it

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) Le Grange offered to paint me for a thousand

MARGARET If you really wish to be painted why don't you give a little more and have a portrait really worth while? John might be induced to do you for a little below his usual price considering that you used to be such good friends

MARGARET Louis Le Grange's reputation isn't worth more than that

HARRIET Well I've heard his work well mentioned

MAGGIE Yes he is doing splendid work

HETTY (*in glee*) Hurrah!

MARGARET Oh dear me no He is only praised by the masses He is accepted not at all by artists themselves

HARRIET (*quietly to MARGARET*) That's very nice of you to suggest—of course I don't know—

HETTY (*anxiously*) Must I really pay the full price?

MAGGIE (*in fear*) For God's sake say yes

HARRIET Le Grange thought I would make a good subject

MARGARET (*quietly to HARRIET*) Of course I don't know whether John would He is very peculiar in these matters He sets his value on his work and thinks it beneath him to discuss price

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Let her fish for it

HETTY (*to MAGGIE*) You needn't try to make us feel small

MARGARET Of course you would Why don't you let Le Grange paint you if you *trust* him?

MARGARET Still I might quite delicately mention to him that inasmuch as you have many influential friends you would be very glad to—to—

HETTY She doesn't seem anxious to have John do it

MAGGIE (*to HETTY*) Finish what I don't want to say

HARRIET But if Le Grange isn't accepted by artists it would be a waste of time to pose for him wouldn't it?

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Help her out.

MARGARET Yes I think it would

HARRIET Oh yes introductions will follow the exhibition of my portrait No doubt I—

MAGGIE (*passionately to HETTY across back of table*) Give us the order John is so despondent he can't endure much longer Help us! Help me! Save us!

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Be patronizing

HARRIET No doubt I shall be able to introduce your husband to his advantage

MAGGIE (*relieved*) Saved

MARGARET If I find John in a propitious mood I shall take pleasure for your sake in telling him about your beauty just as you are sitting now would be a lovely pose

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) We can go now

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) Don't let her think she is doing us a favor

HARRIET It will give me pleasure to add my name to your husband's list of patronesses

MAGGIE (*excitedly to MARGARET*) Run home and tell John the good news

MARGARET (*leisurely to HARRIET*) I little guessed when I came for a pleasant chat about old times that it would develop into business arrangements I had no idea Harriet, that you had any intention of being painted By Le Grange too Well I came just in time to rescue you

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) Run home and tell John Hurry, hurry!

HETTY (*to HARRIET*) You managed the order very neatly She doesn't suspect that you wanted it

HARRIET Now if I am not satisfied with my portrait I shall blame you Margaret dear I am relying upon your opinion of John's talent

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) She doesn't suspect what you came for Run home and tell John!

HARRIET You always had a brilliant mind Margaret

MARGARET Ah it is you who flatter now

MAGGIE (*to MARGARET*) You don't have to stay so long Hurry home!

HARRIET Ah one does not flatter when one tells the truth

MARGARET (*smiles*) I must be going or you will have me completely under your spell

HETTY (*looks at clock*) Yes do go I have to dress for dinner

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) Oh don't hurry

MAGGIE (*to HETTIE*) I hate you!

MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) No really I must but I hope we shall see each other often at the studio I find you so stimulating

HETTY (*to MAGGIE*) I hate you!

HARRIET (*to MARGARET*) It is indeed gratifying to find a kindred spirit

MAGGIE (*to HETTY*) I came for your gold

MARGARET (*to HARRIET*) How delightful it is to know you again

HETTY (*to MAGGIE*) I am going to make you and your husband suffer

HARRIET My kind regards to John

MAGGIE (*to HETTY*) He has forgotten all about you

MARGARET (*rises*) He will be so happy to receive them

HETTY (*to MAGGIE*) I can hardly wait to talk to him again

HARRIET I shall wait then until you send me word^p

MARGARET (*offering her hand*) I'll speak to John about it as soon as I can and tell you when to come
(*HARRIET takes MARGARET's hand affectionately HETTY and MAGGIE rush at each other throw back their veils and fling their speeches fiercely at each other*)

HETTY I love him—I love him—

MAGGIE He's starving—I'm starving—

HETTY I'm going to take him away from you—

MAGGIE I want your money—and your influence

HETTY *and* MAGGIE I'm going to rob you—rob you
(*There is a cymbal crash the lights go out and come up again slowly leaving only MARGARET and HARRIET visible*)

MARGARET (*quietly to HARRIET*) I've had such a delightful afternoon

HARRIET (*offering her hand*) It has been a joy to see you

MARGARET (*sweetly to HARRIET*) Good bye

HARRIET (*sweetly to MARGARET as she kisses her*) Good bye my dear

CURTAIN

Fumed Oak

AN UNPLEASANT COMEDY IN TWO SCENES

BY NOEL COWARD

From Tonight at 8 30

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CHARACTERS

HENRY GOW

DORIS *his wife*

ELSIE *his daughter*

MRS ROCKETT *his mother-in law*

SCENE I Morning

SCENE II Evening

*The action of the play passes in the sitting-room of the Gows house in
South London*

The time is the present day

FUMED OAK

SCENE ONE

The Gows sitting-room is indistinguishable from several thousand other suburban sitting rooms. The dominant note is refinement. There are French windows at the back opening on to a narrow lane of garden. These are veiled discreetly by lace curtains set off by pieces of rather faded blue case ment cloth. There is a tiled fireplace on the L. an upright piano between it and the window. a fumed oak sideboard on the R. and below it a door leading to the hall the stairs and the front door. There is a fumed oak dining-room set consisting of a table and six chairs a sofa an armchair in front of the fire and a plentiful sprinkling over the entire room of orna ments and framed photographs.

When the curtain rises it is about eight thirty on a spring morning. Rain is trickling down the windows and breakfast is laid on the table.

MRS ROCKETT is seated in the armchair by the fire on a small table next to her is a workbasket. She is a fattish gray looking woman dressed in a blouse and skirt and a pepper and salt jumper of artificial silk. Her pince nez snap in and out of a little clip on her bosom and her feet are bad which necessitates the wearing of large quilted slippers in the house. DORIS aged about thirty five is seated R. of the table reading a newspaper propped up against the cruet. She is thin and anæmic and whatever traces of past pret tiness she might have are obscured by the pursed-up rather sour gentility of her expression. She wears a nondescript coat frock a slave bangle and a necklace of amber glass beads. ELSIE her daughter aged about fourteen is sitting opposite to her cutting her toast into strips in order to dip them into her boiled egg. She is a straight haired ordinary looking girl dressed in a navy blue school dress with a glacé red leather waist belt.

There is complete silence broken only by the occasional rattle of a spoon in a cup or a snuffle from ELSIE who has a slight head cold.

HENRY GOW comes into the room. He is tall and spare neatly dressed in a blue serge suit. He wears rimless glasses and his hair is going gray at the sides and thin on the top. He sits down at the table up stage without a word. DORIS automatically rises and goes out returning in a moment with a plate of haddock which she places in front of him and resumes her place. HENRY pours himself out some tea. DORIS without looking at him being re-immerged in the paper passes him the milk and sugar. HENRY stretches for toast across the table.

The silence continues until ELSIE breaks it.

ELSIE Mum?

DORIS (snappily) When you're old enough.

DORIS What?

ELSIE Gladys Pierce is the same age as me and she's got hers up.

ELSIE When can I put my hair up?

DORIS Never you mind about Gladys Pierce, get on with your breakfast

ELSIE I don't see why I can't have it cut That would be better than nothing (*This remark is ignored*) Maisie Blake had hers cut last week and it looks lovely

DORIS Never you mind about Maisie Blake neither She's common

ELSIE Miss Pritchard doesn't think so Miss Pritchard likes Maisie Blake a lot she said it looked ever so nice

DORIS (*irritably*) What?

ELSIE Her hair

DORIS Get on with your breakfast You'll be late

ELSIE (*petulantly*) Oh, Mum—

DORIS And stop sniffing Sniffle, sniffle sniffle! Haven't you got a handkerchief?

ELSIE Yes but it's a clean one

DORIS Never mind use it

MRS ROCKETT The child can't help having a cold

DORIS She can blow her nose can't she, even if she has got a cold?

ELSIE (*conversationally*) Dodie Watson's got a terrible cold she's had it for weeks It went to her chest and then it went back to her head again

MRS ROCKETT That's the worst of schools you're always catching something

ELSIE Miss Pritchard's awful mean to Dodie Watson she said she'd had enough of it

DORIS Enough of what?

ELSIE Her cold
(*There is silence again which is presently shattered by the wailing of a baby in the house next door*)

MRS ROCKETT There's that child again It kept me awake all night

DORIS I'm very sorry I'm sure (*She picks up the newspaper*)

MRS ROCKETT (*fiddling in her work basket*) I wasn't blaming you

DORIS The night before last it was the hot water pipes

MRS ROCKETT You ought to have them seen to

DORIS You know as well as I do you can't stop them making that noise every now and then.

MRS ROCKETT (*threading a needle*) I'm sure I don't know why you don't get a plumber in

DORIS (*grandly*) Because I do not consider it necessary

MRS ROCKETT You would if you slept in my room—gurggle gurggle gurggle all night long—it's all very fine for you you're at the end of the passage

DORIS (*with meaning*) You don't have to sleep there

MRS ROCKETT What do you mean by that?

DORIS You know perfectly well what I mean

MRS ROCKETT (*with spirit*) Listen to me Doris Gow I've got a perfect right to complain if I want to and well you know it It isn't as if I was staying here for nothing

DORIS I really don't know what's the matter with you lately Mother, you do nothing but grumble

MRS ROCKETT Me grumble! I like that I'm sure That's rich that is

DORIS Well you do It gives me a headache

MRS ROCKETT You ought to do something about those headaches of yours They seem to pop on and off at the least thing

DORIS And I wish you wouldn't keep passing remarks about not staying here for nothing

MRS ROCKETT Well it's true I don't

DORIS Anyone would think we was taking advantage of you, to hear you talk

MRS ROCKETT Well they wouldn't be far wrong

DORIS Mother how can you! You're not paying a penny more than you can afford

MRS ROCKETT I never said I was It isn't the money, it's the lack of consideration

(*ELSIE puts her exercise book away in her satchel*)

DORIS Pity you don't go and live with Nora for a change

MRS ROCKETT Nora hasn't got a spare room

DORIS Phyllis has a lovely one looking out over the railway I'm sure her hot water pipes wouldn't keep you awake there isn't enough hot water in them

MRS ROCKETT Of course if I'm not wanted here I can always go to a boarding house or a private hotel

DORIS Catch you!

MRS ROCKETT I'm not the sort to outstay my welcome anywhere

DORIS Oh for heaven's sake don't start that again (*She bangs the paper down on the table*)

MRS ROCKETT (*addressing the air*) It seems as though some of us had got out of bed the wrong side this morning

ELSIE Mum can I have some more toast?

DORIS No

ELSIE I could make it myself over the kitchen fire

DORIS No I tell you Can't you understand plain English? You've had quite enough and you'll be late for school

MRS ROCKETT Never mind Elsie here's twopence (*Taking it out of her purse*) You can buy yourself a sponge cake at Barrets

ELSIE (*rising and taking the two pence*) Thanks Grandma

DORIS You'll do no such thing Elsie

I'm not going to have a child of mine stuffing herself with cake in the middle of the High Street

MRS ROCKETT (*sweetly*) Eat it in the shop dear

DORIS Go on you'll be late

ELSIE Oh Mum it's only ten to

DORIS Do as I tell you

ELSIE Oh all right (*She crosses in front of the table and goes sullenly out of the room and can be heard scampering noisily up the stairs*)

MRS ROCKETT (*irritatingly*) Poor little soul

DORIS I'll trouble you not to spoil Elsie Mother

MRS ROCKETT Spoil her! I like that Better than half starving her

DORIS (*hotly*) Are you insinuating

MRS ROCKETT I'm not insinuating anything Elsie's getting a big girl she only had one bit of toast for her breakfast and she used that for her egg I saw her

DORIS (*rising and putting away the paper in the sideboard drawer*) It's none of your business and in future I'd be much obliged if you'd keep your twopences to yourself (*She returns to her seat at the table*)
(HENRY rises and fetches the paper out)

MRS ROCKETT (*hurt*) Very well of course if I'm to be abused every time I try to bring a little happiness into the child's life

DORIS Anyone would think I ill-treated her the way you talk

MRS ROCKETT You certainly nag her enough

DORIS I don't do any such thing—and I wish you'd leave me to bring up my own child in my own way

MRS ROCKETT That cold's been hanging over her for weeks and a fat lot you care—

DORIS (*rising and getting tray from beside the sideboard*) I've dosed her for it haven't I? The whole house stinks of Vapex What more can I do?

MRS ROCKETT She ought to have had Doctor Bristow last Saturday when it was so bad He'd have cleared it up in no time

DORIS (*putting tray on her chair and beginning to clear things onto it*) You and your Doctor Bristow

MRS ROCKETT Nice thing if it turned to bronchitis (*DORIS throws scraps into the fire*) Mrs Henderson's Muriel got bronchitis all through neglecting a cold the poor child couldn't breathe they had to have two kettles going night and day—

DORIS I suppose your precious Doctor Bristow told you that

MRS ROCKETT Yes he did and what's more he saved the girl's life you ask Mrs Henderson

DORIS Catch me ask Mrs Henderson anything, stuck up thing

MRS ROCKETT Mrs Henderson's a very nice ladylike woman, just be-

cause she's quiet and a bit reserved
you say she's stuck up

DORIS Who does she think she is
anyway Lady Mountbatten? (*She
takes the cruet to the sideboard*)

MRS ROCKETT Really Doris you
make me tired sometimes you do
really

DORIS If you're so fond of Mrs Hen-
derson it's a pity you don't see more
of her I notice you don't go there
often

MRS ROCKETT (*with dignity*) I go
when I am invited

DORIS (*trumpantly*) Exactly

MRS ROCKETT She's not the kind of
woman that likes people popping
in and out all the time We can't
all be Amy Fawcetts

DORIS What's the matter with Amy
Fawcett? (*She takes the teapot to
the sideboard*)

MRS ROCKETT Well, she's common
for one thing she dyes her hair for
another and she's a bit too free and
easy all round for my taste

DORIS She doesn't put on airs any
way

MRS ROCKETT I should think not
after the sort of life she's led

DORIS (*takes bread to sideboard*)
How do you know what sort of a
life she's led?

MRS ROCKETT Everybody knows
you only have to look at her I'm a
woman of the world I am you can't
pull the wool over my eyes—

(*ELSIE comes into the room wear-
ing a mackintosh and a tam o
shanter*)

ELSIE Mum we want a new roll
of toilet paper

DORIS How many times have I told
you ladies don't talk about such
things!

ELSIE (*as she stamps over to the
piano and begins to search untidily
through a pile of music on it*) It's
right down to the bit of cardboard

DORIS (*scraping the bottom of her
cup on the saucer*) Don't untidy
everything like that What are you
looking for?

ELSIE The Pixies Parade I had
it last night

DORIS If it's the one with the blue
cover it's at the bottom

ELSIE It isn't—oh dear Miss Pritch-
ard will be mad at me if I can't find
it

MRS ROCKETT (*rising*) Perhaps you
put it in your satchel dear Here
let me look— (*She opens ELSIE'S
satchel which is hanging over the
back of a chair and fumbles in it*)
Is this it?

ELSIE Oh yes thanks Grandma

DORIS Go along now for heaven's
sake you'll be late
(*MRS ROCKETT helps ELSIE on with
her satchel*)

ELSIE Oh all right, Mum Good
bye Grandma good bye Dad

HENRY Good bye

MRS ROCKETT Good bye dear
give Grandma a kiss
(*ELSIE does so*)

DORIS (*pushing ELSIE out of the door*) Don't dawdle on the way home

ELSIE Oh all right, Mum (*She goes out The slam of the front door shakes the house*)

DORIS (*irritably*) There now

MRS ROCKETT (*with studied politeness*) If you are going down to the shops this morning would it be troubling you too much to get me a reel of white cotton? (*She sits in the armchair*)

DORIS (*tidying the piano*) I thought you were coming with me

MRS ROCKETT I really don't feel up to it

DORIS I'll put it on my list (*She takes a piece of paper out of the sideboard drawer and scribbles on it*)

MRS ROCKETT If it's out of your way please don't trouble It'll do another time

DORIS Henry it's past nine

HENRY (*without looking up*) I know

DORIS You'll be late

HENRY Never mind

DORIS That's a nice way to talk I must say

MRS ROCKETT I'm sure if my Rob

ert had ever lazed about like that in the mornings I'd have thought the world had come to an end

DORIS Henry'll do it once too often mark my words (*She crosses behind HENRY*)

MRS ROCKETT (*biting off her thread*) Well that corner's finished (*She puts away her embroidery and starts to knit*)

DORIS (*to HENRY*) You'll have to move now I've got to clear (*Taking first his saucer then his cup from his hand*)
(*HENRY rises absently*)

MRS ROCKETT Where's Ethel?

DORIS Doing the bedroom (*HENRY quietly goes out of the room*)
(*Throwing more scraps on the fire*)
Look at that wicked waste

MRS ROCKETT What's the matter with him?

DORIS Don't ask me I'm sure I couldn't tell you

MRS ROCKETT He came in very late last night I heard him go into the bathroom (*There is a pause*) That cistern makes a terrible noise

DORIS (*emptying crumbs from cloth into fire and folding it*) Does it in deed!

MRS ROCKETT Yes it does

DORIS (*slamming the teapot onto the tray*) Very sorry I'm sure

MRS ROCKETT Where's he been?

DORIS How do I know?

- MRS ROCKETT Didn't you ask him? night classes and his book reading
—night classes indeed!
- DORIS I wouldn't demean myself
- MRS ROCKETT Been drinking?
- DORIS No
- MRS ROCKETT Sounded very like it to me all that banging about
- DORIS You know Henry never touches a drop
- MRS ROCKETT I know he says he doesn't
- DORIS Oh do shut up Mother we're not all like Father (*She puts the cloth in the sideboard drawer then scrapes grease with her nail from the green cloth on the table*)
- MRS ROCKETT You watch your tongue Doris Gow, don't let me hear you saying anything against the memory of your poor father
- DORIS I wasn't
- MRS ROCKETT (*belligerently*) Oh yes you were, you were insinuating again
- DORIS (*hoisting up the tray*) Father drank and you know it, every body knew it (*She moves L*)
- MRS ROCKETT You're a wicked woman
- DORIS It's true
- MRS ROCKETT Your father was a gentleman which is more than your husband will ever be, with all his
- DORIS (*poking the fire*) Who's insinuating now?
- MRS ROCKETT (*angrily*) I am and I'm not afraid to say so
- DORIS What of it?
- MRS ROCKETT (*with heavy sarcasm*) I suppose he was at a night class last night?
- DORIS (*loudly*) Mind your own business
(*HENRY comes in wearing his mackintosh and a bowler hat*)
- HENRY What's up?
- DORIS Where were you last night?
- HENRY Why?
- DORIS Mother wants to know and so do I
- HENRY I was kept late at the shop and I had a bit of dinner in town
- DORIS Who with?
- HENRY Charlie Henderson (*He picks up the paper off the table and goes out The baby next door bursts into fresh wails*)
- MRS ROCKETT There goes that child again It's my belief it's hungry
- DORIS Wonder you don't go and give it twopence to buy sponge cake (*She pulls the door open with her foot and goes out with the tray as the lights fade on the scene*)

SCENE TWO

It is about seven thirty in the evening *ELSIE is sitting at the piano practising with the loud pedal firmly down all the time* *MRS ROCKETT is sitting in her chair by the fire but she is dressed in her street things and wearing a black hat with a veil* *DORIS also in street clothes is trying on paper patterns*

There is a cloth across the upstage end of the table on which is set a loaf a plate of cold ham a saucer with two tomatoes in it a bottle of AI sauce and a teapot tea cup sugar basin and milk jug

HENRY comes in taking off his mackintosh. He gives one look round the room and goes out into the hall again to hang up his things *ELSIE stops playing and comes over to DORIS*

ELSIE Mum can we go now?

DORIS In a minute

ELSIE We'll miss the Mickey

DORIS Put on your hat and don't worry

ELSIE (*grabbing her hat from the sideboard*) Oh all right
(HENRY re enters)

DORIS Your suppers all ready the kettles on the gas stove when you want it (*Folding up paper patterns*) We've had ours

HENRY Oh!

DORIS And you needn't look injured either

HENRY Very well (*He crosses in front of the table*)

DORIS If you managed to get home a bit earlier it'd save a lot of trouble all round

HENRY (*amiably*) Sorry dear (*He warms his hands at the fire*)

DORIS It's all very fine to be sorry you've been getting later and later these last few weeks they can't keep you overtime every night

HENRY All right dear I'll tell them

DORIS Here Elsie put these away in the cupboard Mind your fingers with the scissors (*She hands her a pile of material and pieces of paper* *ELSIE obediently takes them and puts them in the lefthand cupboard of the sideboard*)

HENRY (*sitting at the table*) Cold ham what a surprise!

DORIS (*looking at him sharply*) What's the matter with it? (*She puts on her coat*)

HENRY I don't know yet

DORIS It's perfectly fresh if that's what you mean
(ELSIE crosses to L C)

HENRY Why are you all so dressed up?

ELSIE We're going to the pictures (*She picks up her bag and gloves*)

HENRY Oh, I see

HENRY That hat looks awful

DORIS (*putting on her gloves*) You can put everything on the tray when you've finished and leave it in the kitchen for Ethel

DORIS (*furiously*) Don't you speak to me like that

HENRY Why not?

HENRY Good old Ethel

DORIS (*slightly non-plussed*) Because I won't have it—that's why not

DORIS (*surprised*) What?

HENRY I said good old Ethel

HENRY It's a common little hat and it looks awful

DORIS Well, it sounded very silly, I'm sure

DORIS (*with an admirable effort at control*) Now listen to me Henry. Now the next time I catch you drinking and coming home here and insulting me I'll

MRS ROCKETT (*scrutinizing him*) What's the matter with you?

HENRY Nothing why?

HENRY (*interrupting her gently*) What will you do Dorrie?

MRS ROCKETT You look funny

HENRY I feel funny

DORIS (*hotly*) I'll give you a piece of my mind—that's what I'll do

MRS ROCKETT Have you been drinking?

HENRY (*rising*) It'll have to be a very little piece. You can't afford much! (*He laughs delightedly at his own joke*)

HENRY Yes

DORIS Henry!

DORIS I'd be very much obliged if you'd kindly tell me what this means?

MRS ROCKETT I knew it!

HENRY I had a whisky and soda in town and another one at the Plough

HENRY I'm celebrating

DORIS (*astounded*) What for?

DORIS Celebrating! What do you mean celebrating?

HENRY Because I felt like it

HENRY (*up L C*) Tonight's our anniversary

DORIS You ought to be ashamed of yourself

DORIS (*R C*) Don't talk so soft, our anniversary's not until November

HENRY I'm going to have another one too a bit later on

HENRY I don't mean that one. Tonight's the anniversary of the first time I had an affair with you and you got in the family way

DORIS You'll do no such thing

DORIS (*shrieking*) Henry! (*She moves down stage*)

HENRY (*delighted with his carefully calculated effect*) Hurray!

DORIS (*beside herself*) How dare you say such a dreadful thing in front of the child too

HENRY (*in romantic tones*) Three years and a bit after that wonderful night our child was born! (*Lapsing into his normal voice*) Considering all the time you took forming your self Else I'm surprised you're not a nicer little girl than you are

DORIS Go upstairs Elsie

HENRY Stay here Elsie
(*ELSIE dithers*)

DORIS Do as I tell you

ELSIE (L C) But Mum

DORIS Mother take her for God's sake! There's going to be a row
(*MRS ROCKETT rises*)

HENRY (*firmly*) Leave her alone and sit down Leave her alone and sit down
(*MRS ROCKETT hesitates ELSIE sits on the piano stool*)

MRS ROCKETT (*subsiding into the chair*) Well I never I

HENRY (*happily*) See? It works like a charm

DORIS A fine exhibition you're making of yourself I must say

HENRY Not bad is it? As a matter of fact I'm rather pleased with it myself

DORIS Go to bed!

HENRY Stop ordering me about see, (*Crossing c*) What right have you got to nag at me and boss me? No right at all I'm the one that pays the rent and works for you and keeps you What do you give me in return I'd like to know? Nothing (*He bangs the table*) I sit through breakfast while you and Mother wrangle You're too busy being snappy and bad tempered even to say good morning I come home tired after working all day and ten to one there isn't even a hot dinner for me here see this ham? That's what I think of the ham (*He throws it at her feet*) And the tomatoes and the Al bloody sauce! (*He throws them too*)

DORIS (*screaming*) Henry! All over the carpet (*Getting plate and knife*)

HENRY (*throwing the butter dish face downwards on the floor*) And that's what I think of the carpet (*He moves L*)

DORIS (*scraping up the butter onto the plate*) That I should live to see this! That I should live to see the man I married make such a beast of himself!

HENRY Stop working yourself up into a state you'll need all your control when you've heard what I'm going to say to you

DORIS (*making a move to him*) Look here

HENRY Sit down And you And you. (*MRS ROCKETT and ELSIE sit again*) I'm afraid you'll have to miss the pictures for once

DORIS Elsie you come with me

MRS ROCKETT Yes go on Ducks
(DORIS makes a movement towards the door, but HENRY is too quick for her He locks the door and slips the key into his pocket)

HENRY I've been waiting for this moment for fifteen years and believe me it's not going to be spoilt for me by you running away

DORIS (on the verge of tears) Let me out of this room

HENRY You'll stay where you are until I've had my say

DORIS Let me out of this room Don't you lay your hands on me (Bursting into tears and sinking down at the table) Oh! Oh! Oh! (She falls into the chair of the table as he pushes her)

ELSIE (starting to cry too) Mum—Oh Mum

HENRY Here you, shut up go and get the port out of the sideboard and give some to your mother Go on do as I tell you (ELSIE terrified and hypnotized into submission goes to the sideboard cupboard and brings out a bottle of invalid port and some glasses snivelling as she does so DORIS continues to sob) That's right (He crosses up c)

MRS ROCKETT (quietly) You drunken brute you!

HENRY (cheerfully) Worse than that, Mother, far worse Just you wait and see (ELSIE sits on the chair of the table)

MRS ROCKETT (ignoring him) Take some port Dorrie it'll do you good

DORIS I couldn't touch any—it'd choke me

HENRY (pouring some out) Come on—here

DORIS Keep away from me

HENRY Drink it and stop snivelling

DORIS I'll never forgive you for this never never never as long as I live (She gulps down some port)

HENRY (noting her gesture) That's better

MRS ROCKETT Pay no attention, Dorrie, he's drunk

HENRY I'm not drunk I've only had two whiskies and sodas just to give me enough guts to take the first plunge You'd never believe how scared I was thinking it over in cold blood I'm not scared any more though it's much easier than I thought it was going to be My only regret is that I didn't come to the boil a long time ago and tell you to your face Dorrie what I think of you what I've been thinking of you for years and this horrid little lad and that old bitch of a mother of yours

MRS ROCKETT (shrilly) Henry Cow!

HENRY You heard me old bitch was what I said and old bitch was what I meant

MRS ROCKETT Let me out of this room (Rising and crossing to the

window) I'm not going to stay here and be insulted—I'm not
(*They all rise*)

HENRY You're going to stay here just as long as I want you to

MRS ROCKETT Oh am I? We'll see about that (*With astonishing quickness she darts over to the window and manages to drag one open*
HENRY *grabs her by the arm*)

HENRY No you don't

MRS ROCKETT Let go of me

DORIS Oh Mother don't let the neighbors know all your business

HENRY Not on your life!

MRS ROCKETT (*suddenly screaming powerfully*) Help! Help! Police! Help! Mrs Harrison—help!
(HENRY *drags her away from the window turns her round and gives her a light slap on the face she staggers against the piano* Meanwhile he shuts the window again locks it and pockets the key)

DORIS (*looking at him in horror—runs to below the table*) Oh God! Oh my God!

ELSIE (*bursting into tears again*) Oh Mum Mum he hit Grandma! Oh Mum (*She runs to DORIS who puts her arm round her protectively*)

MRS ROCKETT (*gasping*) Oh—my heart! I think I'm going to faint—Oh—my heart—Oh—Oh—Oh dear—(MRS ROCKETT *slides onto the floor perceptibly breaking her fall by clinging on to the piano stool*)

DORIS Mother!

HENRY Stay where you are (HENRY *goes to the sideboard and pours out a glass of water* DORIS *disobeying him runs over to her mother* ELSIE *wails*) Stand out of the way Doris we don't all want to get wet (He *approaches with the glass of water* MRS ROCKETT *sits up weakly*)

MRS ROCKETT (*in a far away voice*) Where am I?

HENRY Number Seventeen Cranworth Road Clapham

MRS ROCKETT Oh—oh dear!

HENRY Look here Mother I don't want there to be any misunderstanding about this I liked slapping you just now see? It was lovely and if you don't behave yourself and keep quiet I shall slap you again Go and sit in your chair and remember if you feel faint the waters all ready for you (He *helps her up and escorts her to her chair by the fire* She *collapses into it and looks at him balefully*) Now then Sit down DORIS you look silly standing about

DORIS (*with a great effort at control—sits in HENRY's chair*) Henry—

HENRY (*slowly but very firmly*) Sit down! And keep her quiet or I'll fetch her one too

DORIS (*with dignity*) Come here, Elsie (ELSIE *sits on the chair R of the table*) (Banging her back) Shut up, will you!

HENRY That's right (He *walks round the room slowly and in si*

lence looking at them with an expression of the greatest satisfaction on his face Finally he goes over to the fireplace MRS ROCKETT pumps slightly as he approaches her but he smiles at her reassuringly Mean while DORIS recovering from her fear is beginning to simmer with rage she remains still however watching (*Sitting on the piano stool*) Now then I'm going to start quite quietly explaining a few things to you

DORIS Enjoying yourself aren't you?
(*MRS ROCKETT wipes her neck with her handkerchief*)

HENRY You've said it

DORIS (*gaining courage*) You'll grin on the other side of your face before I've done with you

HENRY (*politely*) Very likely Dorrie very likely indeed!

DORIS And don't you Dorrie me either! Coming home here drunk hitting poor Mother and frightening Elsie out of her wits

HENRY Out of her what?— Do her good do 'em both good a little excitement in the home God knows it's dull enough as a rule

DORIS (*with biting sarcasm*) Very clever oh very clever I'm sure

HENRY Sixteen years ago tonight Dorrie you and me had a little rough and tumble in your Aunt Daisy's house in Stansfield Road do you remember?

DORIS Henry— (*Pointing to ELsie*)

HENRY (*ignoring her*) We had the house to ourselves it being a Sunday your aunt had popped over to the Golden Calf with Mr Simmonds the lodger which as the writers say was her wont—

MRS ROCKETT (*rising*) This is disgusting I won't listen to another word

HENRY (*rising—rounding on her*) You will! Shut up!
(*MRS ROCKETT sits*)

DORIS Pay no attention Mother, he's gone mad

HENRY Let me see now where was I? Oh yes Stansfield Road You'd been after me for a long while Dorrie I didn't know it then but I realized it soon after You had to have a husband what with Nora married and Phyllis engaged both of them younger than you you had to have a husband and quick so you fixed on me You were pretty enough and I fell for it hook line and sinker then a couple of months later you told me you'd chicked you cried a hell of a lot I remember said the disgrace would kill your mother if she ever found out I didn't know then that it'd take a sight more than that to kill that leathery old mare—

MRS ROCKETT (*bursting into tears*) I won't stand it I won't! I won't!

HENRY (*rising above her sobs*) I expect you were in on the whole business in a refined way of course you knew what was going on all right you knew that Dorrie was no more in the family way than I was but we got married you both saw to that, and I chucked up all the

plans I had for getting on perhaps being a steward in a ship and seeing a bit of the world Oh yes all that had to go and we settled down in rooms and I went into Ferguson's Hosiery

DORIS I've given you the best years of my life and don't you forget it

HENRY You've never given me the best of anything not even yourself You didn't even have Elsie willingly

DORIS (*wildly*) It's not true—stop up your ears Elsie don't listen to him he's wicked—he's wicked—
(*ELsie makes to do it*)

HENRY (*grumly*) It's true all right, and you know it as well as I do

DORIS (*shrilly*) It was only right that you married me It was only fair! You took advantage of me didn't you? You took away my innocence It was only right that you paid for it

HENRY Come off it Dornie don't talk so silly I was the innocent one not you I found out you'd cheated me a long long time ago and when I found out realized it for certain I started cheating you (*He leans on the chair L of the table*) Prepare yourself Dornie my girl you're going to be really upset this time I've been saving! Every week for over ten years I've been earning a little bit more than you thought I was I've managed by hook and by crook to put by five hundred and seventy-two pounds—d you hear me?—five hundred and seventy two pounds!

MRS ROCKETT (*jumping to her feet*) Henry! You never have—it's not true—

DORIS (*also jumping up*) You couldn't have—you'd have given it away—I should have found out—

HENRY I thought that'd rouse you but don't get excited (MRS ROCKETT *sits again*) I haven't got it on me it's in the bank And it's not for you it's for me—all but fifty pounds of it that much is for you just fifty pounds the last you'll ever get from me—

DORIS Henry! You couldn't be so cruel! You couldn't be so mean!

HENRY I've done what I think's fair and what I think's fair is a damn sight more than you deserve To start with I've transferred the free hold of this house into your name so you'll always have a roof over your head—you can take in lodgers at a pinch though God help the poor bleeders if you do!

DORIS Five hundred and seventy two pounds! You've got all that and you're going to leave me to starve! (*She takes off her coat and puts it on the chair down R*)

HENRY Cut out the drama Dornie and have a look at your mother's savings bank book—I bet you'll find she's got enough to keep you in comfort till the day you die She soaked her old man plenty, I'm sure—before he took to soaking himself!

MRS ROCKETT It's a lie! (*She rises*)

HENRY Now listen to me! Mother Machree—you've had one sock in the jaw this evening and you're not just asking for another you're sitting up and begging for it
(DORIS *pulls the curtains back*)

MRS ROCKETT I'll have you up for assault I'll have the police on you my fine fellow!

HENRY They'll have to be pretty nippy—my boat sails first thing in the morning

DORIS (*horrified*) Boat! (*At the window*)
(MRS ROCKETT sits)

HENRY (*moving up c*) I'm going away I've got my ticket here in my pocket and my passport My passport photo's a fair scream, I wish I could show it to you but I don't want you to see the nice new name I've got

DORIS (*crossing to him*) Henry you can't do it I can have you stopped by law It's desertion

HENRY That's right Dornie you've said it Desertion's just what it is

DORIS (*breathlessly*) Where are you going you've got to tell me Where are you going?

HENRY Wouldn't you like to know? Maybe Africa maybe China maybe Australia There are lots of places in the world you know nothing about Dornie You've often laughed at me for reading books but I've found out a hell of a lot from books (DORIS sits on HENRY'S chair) There are islands in the South Seas for instance with coco palms and turtles and sunshine all the year round—you can live there for practically nothing then there's Australia or New Zealand with a little bit of capital I might start in a small way sheep farming Think of it miles and miles of open country stretching as far as the eye can see

—good food and fresh air—that might be very nice that might suit me beautifully Then there's South America There are coffee plantations there and sugar plantations and banana plantations If I go to South America I'll send you a whole crate Ave a banana Dornie! Ave a banana!

DORIS Henry listen to me you can't do this dreadful thing you can't! If you don't love me any more think of Elsie

HENRY (*still in his dream*) Then there's the sea not the sea we know at Worthing with the tide going in and out regular and the band playing on the pier The real sea's what I mean The sea that Joseph Conrad wrote about and Rudyard Kipling and lots of other people too a sea with whacking great waves and water spouts and typhoons and flying fish and phosphorus making the foam look as if it was lit up (DORIS turns up stage on her chair) Those people knew a thing or two I can tell you They knew what life could be like if you give it a chance They knew there was a bit more to it than refinement and fumed oak and getting old and miserable with nothing to show for it I'm a middle-aged man, but my health's not too bad taken all round There's still time for me to see a little bit of real life before I konk out I'm still fit enough to do a job of work—real work mind you—not bowing and scraping and wearing myself out showing fussy old cows the way to the lace and the china ware and the bargain basement (*He crosses to the fireplace*)

DORIS (*hysterically*) God will punish you you just see if He doesn't you just see—

HENRY God's been punishing me for fifteen years it's high time He laid off me now He's been punishing me good and proud for being damn fool enough to let you get your claws into me in the first place——

DORIS (*changing her tactics*)
Henry have pity for God's sake have pity

HENRY And don't start weeping and wailing either because it won't wash I know you Dorrie I know you through and through You're frightened now scared out of your wits but give you half a chance and you'd be worse than ever you were You're a bad lot Dorrie not what the world would call a bad lot but what I call a bad lot Mean and cold and respectable

DORIS (*rising and going to him*)
Listen to me Henry you've got to listen—you must You can't leave us to starve you can't throw us on to the streets—if I've been a bad wife to you I'm sorry—I'll try to be better really I will I swear to God I will—— You can't do this If you won't forgive me think of Elsie think of poor little Elsie——

HENRY Poor little Elsie my eye! I think Elsie's awful I always have ever since she was little She's never done anything but whine and snivel and try to get something for nothing——

ELSIE (*wailing*) Oh Mum did you hear what he said? Oh Dad oh dear——

MRS ROCKETT (*crossing and comforting her*) There there dear don't listen to him—— (*She sits in the chair L. of the table*)

HENRY Elsie can go to work in a year or so in the meantime Dorrie you can go to work yourself you're quite a young woman still and strong as an ox—Here's your fifty pounds—— (*He takes an envelope out of his pocket and throws it on to the table Then he goes towards the door DORIS rushes after him and hangs on to his arm*)

DORIS Henry Henry you shan't go you shan't——
(*ELSIE rises*)

HENRY (*struggling with her*) Leave hold of me (*He goes to the door*)

DORIS (*following him*) Mother Mother—help—help me don't let him go——

MRS ROCKETT Run Doris run!
(*HENRY frees himself from her and taking her by the shoulders forces her back into a chair then he unlocks the door and opens it*)
(*ELSIE sits in the chair*)

HENRY I'm taking my last look at you Dorrie I shall never see you again as long as I live—— It's a dream come true

(*DORIS buries her head in her arms and starts to sob loudly MRS ROCKETT sits transfixed staring at him murderously*)

(*Quietly*) Three generations Grandmother Mother and Kid Made of the same bones and sinews and muscles and glands millions of you millions just like you You're past it now Mother you're past the thick of the fray you're nothing but a music hall joke a mother in law with a bit of money put by Dorrie the next few years will show whether you've got guts or not.

Maybe what I'm doing to you will save your immortal soul in the long run. That'd be a bit of all right, wouldn't it? I doubt it though, your immortal souls too measly. You're a natural bully and a cheat and I'm sick of the sight of you. I should also like to take this opportunity of saying that I hate that bloody awful slave bangle and I always have. As for you, Elsie, you've got a chance, it's a slim one, I grant you, but still it's a chance. If you learn to work and be independent and, when the

time comes, give what you have to give freely and without demanding lifelong payment for it, there's just a bit of hope that you'll turn into a decent human being. At all events, if you'll take one parting piece of advice from your cruel ungrateful father, you'll spend the first money you ever earn on having your adenoids out. Good-bye, one and all. Nice to have known you!

(The wails of DORIS and ELSIE rise in volume as he goes jauntily out, slamming the door behind him.)

CURTAIN

Waiting for Lefty

BY CLIFFORD ODETS

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CHARACTERS

FATT

JOE

EDNA

MILLER

FAYETTE

IRV

FLORRIE

SID

CLAYTON

AGATE KELLER

HENCHMAN

SECRETARY

ACTOR

REILLY

DR BARNES

DR BENJAMIN

A MAN

WAITING FOR LEFTY

As the curtain goes up we see a bare stage. On it are sitting six or seven men in a semi-circle. Lolling against the proscenium down left is a young man chewing a toothpick, a gunman. A fat man of porcine appearance is talking directly to the audience. In other words he is the head of a union and the men ranged behind him are a committee of workers. They are now seated in interesting different attitudes and present a wide diversity of type as we shall soon see. The fat man is hot and heavy under the collar, near the end of a long talk, but not too hot; he is well fed and confident. His name is HARRY FATT.

FATT You're so wrong I ain't laughing. Any guy with eyes to read knows it. Look at the textile strike—out like lions and in like lambs. Take the San Francisco tie up—starvation and broken heads. The steel boys wanted to walk out too but they changed their minds. It's the trend of the times, that's what it is. All we workers got a good man behind us now. He's top man of the country—looking out for our interests—the man in the White House is the one I'm referring to. That's why the times ain't ripe for a strike. He's working day and night—

VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE For who?
(The GUNMAN stirs himself.)

FATT For you! The records prove it. If this was the Hoover régime would I say don't go out, boys? Not on your tintype! But things is different now. You read the papers as well as me. You know it. And that's why I'm against the strike. Because we gotta stand behind the man who's standin' behind us! The whole coun-
try—

ANOTHER VOICE Is on the blink!
(The GUNMAN looks grave.)

FATT Stand up and show yourself, you damn red! Be a man, let's see what you look like! (*Waits in vain*) Yellow from the word go! Red and yellow makes a dirty color, boys. I got my eyes on four or five of them in the union here. What the hell'll they do for you? Pull you out and run away when trouble starts. Give those birds a chance and they'll have your sisters and wives in the whore houses like they done in Russia. They'll tear Christ off his bleeding cross. They'll wreck your homes and throw your babies in the river. You think that's bunk? Read the papers! Now listen, we can't stay here all night. I gave you the facts in the case. You boys got hot suppers to go to and—

ANOTHER VOICE Says you!

GUNMAN Sit down, Punk!

ANOTHER VOICE Where's Lefty?
(*Now this question is taken up by the others in unison. FATT pounds with gavel.*)

FATT That's what I wanna know. Where's your pal Lefty? You elected him chairman—where the hell did he disappear?

VOICES We want Lefty! Lefty! Lefty!

FATT (*pounding*) What the hell is this—a circus? You got the committee here This bunch of cowboys you elected (*Pointing to man on extreme right end*)

MAN Benjamin

FATT Yeah Doc Benjamin (*Pointing to other men in circle in seated order*) Benjamin Miller Stein, Mitchell Phillips Keller It ain't my fault Lefty took a run out powder If you guys—

A GOOD VOICE What's the committee say?

OTHERS The committee! Let's hear from the committee!

(*FATT tries to quiet the crowd but one of the seated men suddenly comes to the front The GUNMAN moves over to center stage but FATT says*)

FATT Sure let him talk Let's hear what the red boys gotta say! (*Various shouts are coming from the audience FATT insolently goes back to his seat in the middle of the circle He sits on his raised platform and relights his cigar The GUNMAN goes back to his post JOE the new speaker raises his hand for quiet Gets it quickly He is sore*)

JOE You boys know me I ain't a red boy one bit! Here I'm carryin' a

shrapnel that big I picked up in the war And maybe I don't know it when it rains! Don't tell me red! You know what we are? The black and blue boys! We been kicked around so long we're black and blue from head to toes But I guess any one who says straight out he don't like it he's a red boy to the leaders of the union What's this crap about goin' home to hot suppers? I'm asking to your faces how many's got hot suppers to go home to? Anyone who's sure of his next meal raise your hand! A certain gent sitting behind me can raise them both But not in front here! And that's why we're talking strike—to get a living wage!

VOICE Where's Lefty?

JOE I honest to God don't know but he didn't take no run out powder That Wop's got more guts than a slaughter house Maybe a traffic jam got him but he'll be here But don't let this red stuff scare you Unless fighting for a living scares you We gotta make up our minds My wife made up my mind last week if you want the truth It's plain as the nose on Sol Fenberg's face we need a strike There's us comin' home every night—eight ten hours on the cab God the wife says eighty cents ain't money—don't buy beans almost You're workin' for the company she says to me Joe you ain't workin' for me or the family no more! She says to me If you don't start

I JOE AND EDNA

The lights fade out and a white spot picks out the playing space within the space of seated men. The seated men are very dimly visible in the outer dark but more prominent is FATT smoking his cigar and often blowing the smoke in the lighted circle

A tired but attractive woman of thirty comes into the room drying her hands on an apron. She stands there sullenly as JOE comes in from the other side home from work. For a moment they stand and look at each other in silence

JOE Where's all the furniture honey?

EDNA Take MY word! Whose fault is it?

EDNA They took it away. No installments paid.

JOE Must you start that stuff again?

JOE When?

EDNA Maybe you'd like to talk about books?

EDNA Three o'clock.

JOE I'd like to slap you in the mouth!

JOE They can't do that.

EDNA No, you won't.

EDNA Can't? They did it.

JOE (*sheepish*) Jeez, Edna, you get me sore some time.

JOE Why the palookas we paid three quarters.

EDNA But just look at me—I'm laughing all over!

EDNA The man said read the contract.

JOE We must have signed a phony.

JOE Don't insult me. Can I help it if times are bad? What the hell do you want me to do—jump off a bridge or something?

EDNA It's a regular contract and you signed it.

EDNA Don't yell. I just put the kids to bed so they won't know they missed a meal. If I don't have Emmy's shoes soled tomorrow she can't go to school. In the meantime let her sleep.

JOE Don't be so sour, Edna. (*Tries to embrace her*)

EDNA Do it in the movies. Joe—they pay Clark Gable big money for it.

JOE Honey, I rode the wheels off the chariot today. I cruised around five hours without a call. It's conditions.

JOE This is a helluva house to come home to. Take my word!

EDNA Tell it to the A & P!

EDNA I m not God!

JOE I booked two twenty on the clock A lady with a dog was lit she gave me a quarter tip by mistake If you d only listen to me—we re rolling in wealth

JOE Jeez I wish I was a kid again and didn t have to think about the next minute

EDNA Yeah? How much?

EDNA But you re not a kid and you do have to think about the next minute You got two blondie kids sleeping in the next room They need food and clothes I m not mentioning anything else—But we re stalled like a flivver in the snow For five years I laid awake at night listening to my heart pound For God s sake do something Joe get wise Maybe get your buddies together maybe go on strike for better money Poppa did it during the war and they won out I m turning into a sour old nag

JOE I had coffee and— in a beanery (*Hands her silver coins*) A buck four

EDNA The second months rent is due tomorrow

JOE Don t look at me that way Edna

JOE (*defending himself*) Strikes don t work!

EDNA I m looking through you not at you Everything was gonna be so ducky! A cottage by the water fall roses in Picardy You re a four star bust! If you think I m standing for it much longer you re crazy as a bedbug

EDNA Who told you?

JOE I d get another job if I could There s no work—you know it

JOE Besides that means not a nickel a week while we re out Then when it s over they don t take you back

EDNA I only know we re at the bottom of the ocean

EDNA Suppose they don t! What s to lose?

JOE What can I do?

JOE Well we re averaging six seven dollars a week now

EDNA Who s the man in the family you or me?

EDNA That just pays for the rent

JOE That s no answer Get down to brass tacks Christ gimme a break too! A coffee cake and java all day I m hungry too Babe I d work my fingers to the bone if—

JOE That is something Edna

EDNA I ll open a can of salmon

EDNA It isn t They ll push you down to three and four a week before you know it Then you ll sav That s somethin too!

JOE Not now Tell me what to do!

JOE There s too many cabs on the street that s the whole damn trouble

EDNA Let the company worry about that you big fool! If their cabs didn't make a profit they'd take them off the streets. Or maybe you think they're in business just to pay Joe Mitchell's rent!

JOE You don't know a b c Edna

EDNA I know this—your boss is making suckers out of you boys every minute. Yes, and suckers out of all the wives and the poor innocent kids who'll grow up with crooked spines and sick bones. Sure I see it in the papers: how good orange juice is for kids. But damn it, our kids get colds one on top of the other. They look like little ghosts. Betty never saw a grapefruit. I took her to the store last week and she pointed to a stack of grapefruits. 'What's that!' she said. My God, Joe—the world is supposed to be for all of us.

JOE You'll wake them up

EDNA I don't care as long as I can maybe wake you up

JOE Don't insult me. One man can't make a strike

EDNA Who says one? You got hundreds in your rotten union!

JOE The Union ain't rotten

EDNA No? Then what are they doing? Collecting dues and patting your back?

JOE They're making plans

EDNA What kind?

JOE They don't tell us

EDNA It's too damn bad about you.

They don't tell little Joey what's happening in his little wise union. What do you think it is—a ping pong game?

JOE You know they're racketeers. The guys at the top would shoot you for a nickel.

EDNA Why do you stand for that stuff?

JOE Don't you wanna see me alive?

EDNA (*after a deep pause*) No. I don't think I do, Joe. Not if you can lift a finger to do something about it and don't. No, I don't care.

JOE Honey, you don't understand what—

EDNA And any other hack that won't fight. Let them all be ground to hamburger!

JOE It's one thing to—

EDNA Take your hand away! Only they don't grind me to little pieces! I got different plans. (*Starts to take off her apron*)

JOE Where are you going?

EDNA None of your business

JOE What's up your sleeve?

EDNA My arm'd be up my sleeve, darling, if I had a sleeve to wear. (*Puts neatly folded apron on back of chair*)

JOE Tell me!

EDNA Tell you what?

JOE Where are you going?

ments political emotional and as general chorus Whispering The fat boss now blows a heavy cloud of smoke into the scene)

EDNA Don't you remember my old boy friend?

JOE Who?

JOE (*finally*) Well I guess I am't got a leg to stand on

EDNA Bud Haas He still has my picture in his watch He earns a living

EDNA No?

JOE What the hell are you talking about

JOE (*suddenly mad*) No you lousy tart no! Get the hell out of here Go pick up that bull thrower on the corner and stop at some cushy hotel downtown He's probably been coming here every morning and laying you while I hacked my guts out!

EDNA I heard worse than I'm talking about

JOE Have you seen Bud since we got married?

EDNA Maybe

EDNA You're crawling like a worm!

JOE If I thought (*He stands looking at her*)

JOE You'll be crawling in a minute

EDNA See much? Listen boy friend if you think I won't do this it just means you can't see straight

EDNA You don't scare me that much! (*Indicates a half inch on her finger*)

JOE Stop talking bull!

JOE This is what I slaved for!

EDNA This isn't five years ago Joe

EDNA Tell it to your boss!

JOE You mean you'd leave me and the kids?

JOE He don't give a damn for you or me!

EDNA I'd leave you like a shot!

EDNA That's what I say

JOE No

JOE Don't change the subject!

EDNA Yes!
(*JOE turns away, sitting on a chair with his back to her Outside the lighted circle of the playing stage we hear the other seated members of the strike committee She will she will it happens that way etc This group should be used throughout for various com-*)

EDNA This is the subject the EX ACT SUBJECT! Your boss makes this subject I never saw him in my life but he's putting ideas in my head a mile a minute He's giving your kids that fancy disease called the rickets He's making a jelly fish outa you and putting wrinkles in my face This is the subject every inch of the way! He's throwing me into

Bud Haas lap When in hell will you get wise——

JOE I m not so dumb as you think! But you are talking like a Red

EDNA I dont know what that means But when a man knocks you down you get up and kiss his fist! You gutless piece of boloney

JOE One man cant——

EDNA (*with great joy*) I dont say one man! I say a hundred a thousand a whole million I say But start in your own union Get those hack boys together! Sweep out those racketeers like a pile of dirt! Stand up like men and fight for the crying kids and wives Goddammit! I m tired of slavery and sleepless nights

JOE (*with her*) Sure sure!

EDNA Yes Get brass toes on your shoes and know where to kick!

JOE (*suddenly jumping up and kissing his wife full on the mouth*) Listen Edna I m gom down to 174th Street to look up Lefty Costello Lefty was saying the other day (*He suddenly stops*) How about this Haas guy?

EDNA Get out of here!

JOE I ll be back! (*Runs out*) (*For a moment EDNA stands triumphant There is a blackout and when the regular lights come up JOE MITCHELL is concluding what he has been saying*)

JOE You guys know this stuff better than me We gotta walk out! (*Abruptly he turns and goes back to his seat and blackout*)

BLACKOUT

II LAB ASSISTANT EPISODE

Discovered MILLER a lab assistant looking around and FAYETTE an industrialist

FAY Like it?

MILLER Very much I ve never seen an office like this outside the movies

FAY Yes I often wonder if interior decorators and bathroom fixture people dont get all their ideas from Hollywood Our countrys extraordinary that way Soap cosmetics electric refrigerators—just let Mrs Consumer know they re used by the Crawfords and Garbos—more volume of sale than one plant can handle!

MILL I m afraid it isnt that easy Mr Fayette

FAY No youre right—gross exaggeration on my part Competition is cut throat today Markets up flush against a stone wall The astronomers had better hurry—open Mars to trade expansion

MILL Or it will be just too bad!

FAY Cigar?

MILL Thank you, dont smoke

FAY Drink?

MILL Very Hes an important chemist!

MILL Ditto Mr Fayette

FAY I like sobriety in my workers the trained ones I mean The Pollacks and niggers theyre better drunk—keeps them out of mischief Wondering why I had you come over?

FAY (*leaning over seriously*) We think so Miller We think so to the extent of asking you to stay within the building throughout the time you work with him

MILL You mean sleep and eat in?

MILL If you dont mind my saying—very much

FAY Yes

MILL It can be arranged

FAY (*patting him on the knee*) I like your work

FAY Fine Youll go far Miller

MILL Thanks

MILL May I ask the nature of the new work?

FAY No reason why a talented young man like yourself shouldnt string along with us—a growing concern Loyalty is well repaid in our organization Did you see Siegfried this morning?

FAY (*looking around first*) Poison gas

MILL Poison!

MILL He hasnt been in the laboratory all day

FAY Orders from above I dont have to tell you from where New type poison gas for modern warfare

FAY I told him yesterday to raise you twenty dollars a month Starts this week

MILL I see

MILL You dont know how happy my wife ll be

FAY You didnt know a new war was that close did you?

FAY Oh I can appreciate it (*He laughs*)

MILL I guess I didnt

MILL Was that all, Mr Fayette?

FAY I dont have to stress the importance of absolute secrecy

MILL I understand!

FAY Yes except that were switching you to laboratory A tomorrow Siegfried knows about it Thats why I had you in The new work is very important Siegfried recommended you very highly as a man to trust Youll work directly under Dr Brenner Make you happy?

FAY The world is an armed camp today One match sets the whole world blazing in forty eight hours Uncle Sam wont be caught napping!

MILL (*addressing his pencil*) They

say 12 million men were killed in that last one and 20 million more wounded or missing

FAY That's not our worry If big business went sentimental over human life there wouldn't be big business of any sort!

MILL My brother and two cousins went in the last one

FAY They died in a good cause

MILL My mother says no!

FAY She won't worry about you this time You're too valuable behind the front

MILL That's right

FAY All right Miller See Siegfried for further orders

MILL You should have seen my brother—he could ride a bike with out hands

FAY You'd better move some clothes and shaving tools in tomorrow Remember what I said—you're with a growing organization

MILL He could run the hundred yards in 9 8 flat

FAY Who?

MILL My brother He's in the Meuse Argonne Cemetery Momma went there in 1926

FAY Yes those things stick How's your handwriting Miller fairly legible?

MILL Fairly so

FAY Once a week I'd like a little report from you

MILL What sort of report?

FAY Just a few hundred words once a week on Dr Brenner's progress

MILL Don't you think it might be better coming from the Doctor?

FAY I didn't ask you that

MILL Sorry

FAY I want to know what progress he's making the reports to be purely confidential—between you and me

MILL You mean I'm to watch him?

FAY Yes!

MILL I guess I can't do that

FAY Thirty a month raise

MILL You said twenty

FAY Thirty!

MILL Guess I'm not built that way

FAY Forty

MILL Spying's not in my line Mr Fayette!

FAY You use ugly words Mr Miller!

MILL For ugly activity? Yes!

FAY Think about it Miller Your chances are excellent

MILL No

FAY You're doing something for

your country Assuring the United States that when those goddam Japs start a ruckus we'll have offensive weapons to back us up! Don't you read your newspapers Miller?

(*Simultaneously*) { MILL And my job!
FAY And your job!
MILL You misunderstand—

MILL Nothing but Andy Gump

MILL Rather dig ditches first!

FAY If you were on the inside you'd know I'm talking cold sober truth! Now I'm not asking you to make up your mind on the spot Think about it over your lunch period

FAY That's a big job for foreigners

MILL But sneaking—and making poison gas—that's for Americans?

FAY It's up to you

MILL No

MILL My mind's made up

FAY Made up your mind already?

FAY No hard feelings?

MILL Afraid so

MILL Sure hard feelings! I'm not the civilized type Mr Fayette Nothing suave or sophisticated about me Plenty of hard feelings! Enough to want to bust you and all your kind square in the mouth! (*Does exactly that*)

FAY You understand the consequences?

MILL I lose my raise—

BLACKOUT

III THE YOUNG HACK AND HIS GIRL

Opens with girl and brother FLORENCE waiting for SID to take her to a dance

FLOR I gotta right to have some thing out of life I don't smoke I don't drink So if Sid wants to take me to a dance I'll go Maybe if you was in love you wouldn't talk so hard

want that boy hanging around the house and she don't want you meeting him in Crotona Park

FLOR I'll meet him anytime I like!

IRV I'm saying it for your good

IRV If you do yours truly'll take care of it in his own way With just one hand tool

FLOR Don't be so good to me

IRV Mom's sick in bed and you'll be worryin' her to the grave She don't

FLOR Why are you all so set against him?

IRV Mom told you ten times—it ain't him. It's that he ain't got nothing. Sure we know he's serious that he's stuck on you. But that don't cut no ice.

FLOR Taxi drivers used to make good money.

IRV Today they're makin' five and six dollars a week. Maybe you wanta raise a family on that. Then you'll be back here living with us again and I'll be supporting two families in one. Well, over my dead body.

FLOR Irv, I don't care—I love him!

IRV You're a little kid with half-baked ideas!

FLOR I stand there behind the counter the whole day. I think about him—

IRV If you thought more about Mom it would be better.

FLOR Don't I take care of her every night when I come home? Don't I cook supper and iron your shirts and you give me a pain in the neck too. Don't try to shut me up! I bring a few dollars in the house too. Don't you see I want something else out of life? Sure I want romance, love, babies. I want everything in life I can get.

IRV You take care of Mom and watch your step!

FLOR And if I don't?

IRV Yours truly'll watch it for you!

FLOR You can talk that way to a girl.

IRV I'll talk that way to your boy friend too and it won't be with words! Florrie, if you had a pair of eyes you'd see it's for your own good we're talking. This ain't no time to get married. Maybe later—

FLOR Maybe Later never comes for me though. Why don't we send Mom to a hospital? She can die in peace there instead of looking at the clock on the mantelpiece all day.

IRV That needs money. Which we don't have!

FLOR Money money money!

IRV Don't change the subject.

FLOR This is the subject!

IRV You gonna stop seeing him? (*She turns away*) Jesus kiddle I remember when you were a baby with curls down your back. Now I gotta stand here yellin' at you like this.

FLOR I'll talk to him, Irv.

IRV When?

FLOR I asked him to come here tonight. We'll talk it over.

IRV Don't get soft with him. Nowadays is no time to be soft. You gotta be hard as a rock or go under.

FLOR I found that out. There's the bell. Take the egg off the stove. I boiled for Mom. Leave us alone, Irv.

(*SID comes in—the two men look at each other for a second. Irv exits.*)

SID (*enters*) Hello, Florrie.

FLOR Hello, Honey. You're looking tired.

SID Naw I just need a shave

FLOR The French and Indian War

FLOR Well draw your chair up to the fire and I'll ring for brandy and soda like in the movies

SID What's on your mind?

FLOR I got us on my mind Sid. Night and day Sid!

SID If this was the movies I'd bring a big bunch of roses

SID I smacked a beer truck today Did I get hell! I was driving along thinking of us too You don't have to say it—I know what's on your mind I'm rat poison around here

FLOR How big?

FLOR Not to me

SID Fifty or sixty dozen—the kind with long long stems—big as that

SID I know to who and I know why I don't blame them We're engaged now for three years

FLOR You dope

FLOR That's a long time

SID Your Paris gown is beautiful

FLOR (*acting grandly*) Yes Percy velvet panels are coming back again Madame La Farge told me today that Queen Marie herself designed it

SID My brother Sam joined the navy this morning—get a break that way They'll send him down to Cuba with the hootchy kootchy girls He don't know from nothing that dumb basket ball player!

SID Gee !

FLOR Don't you do that

FLOR Every princess in the Balkans is wearing one like this (*Poses grandly*)

SID Don't you worry I'm not the kind who runs away But I'm so tired of being a dog Baby I could choke I don't even have to ask what's going on in your mind I know from the word go cause I'm thinking the same things too

SID Hold it (*Does a nose camera—thumbing nose and imitating grinding of camera with other hand Suddenly she falls out of the posture and swiftly goes to him to embrace him to kiss him with love Finally*)

FLOR It's yes or no—nothing in between

SID You look tired Florrie

SID The answer is no—a big electric sign looking down on Broadway!

FLOR Naw I just need a shave (*She laughs tremulously*)

FLOR We wanted to have kids

SID You worried about your mother?

SID But that sort of life ain't for the dogs which is us Christ, Baby! I get

FLOR No

SID What's on your mind?

like thunder in my chest when we re together If we went off together I could maybe look the world straight in the face spit in its eye like a man should do Goddamit it's trying to be a man on the earth Two in life together

FLOR But something wants us to be lonely like that—crawling alone in the dark Or they want us trapped

SID Sure the big shot money men want us like that

FLOR Highly insulting us——

SID Keeping us in the dark about what is wrong with us in the money sense They got the power an mean to be damn sure they keep it They know if they give in just an inch all the dogs like us will be down on them together—an ocean knocking them to hell and back and each singing cuckoo with stars coming from their nose and ears I'm not raving Florrie——

FLOR I know you're not, I know

SID I don't have the words to tell you what I feel I never finished school

FLOR I know

SID But it's relative like the professors say We worked like hell to send him to college—my kid brother Sam I mean—and look what he done—joined the navy! The damn fool don't see the cards is stacked for all of us The money man dealing himself a hot royal flush Then giving you and me a phony hand like a pair of tens or something Then keep on losing the pots cause

the cards is stacked against you Then he says what's the matter you can't win—no stuff on the ball he says to you And kids like my brother believe it cause they don't know better For all their education they don't know from nothing

But wait a minute! Don't he come around and say to you—this millionaire with a jazz band—listen Sam or Sid or what's your name you're no good but here's a chance The whole world'll know who you are Yes sir he says get up on that ship and fight those bastards who's making the world a lousy place to live in The Japs the Turks the Greeks Take this gun—kill the slobs like a real hero he says a real American Be a hero!

And the guy you're poking at? A real louse just like you cause they don't let him catch more than a pair of tens too On that foreign soil he's a guy like me and Sam a guy who wants his baby like you and hot sun on his face! They'll teach Sam to point the guns the wrong way that dumb basket ball player!

FLOR I got a lump in my throat Honey

SID You and me—we never even had a room to sit in somewhere

FLOR The park was nice

SID In Winter? The hallways I'm glad we never got together This way we don't know what we missed

FLOR (*in a burst*) Sid I'll go with you—we'll get a room somewhere

SID Naw they're right If we can't climb higher than this together—we better stay apart

FLOR I swear to God I wouldn't care

SID You would you would—in a year two years you'd curse the day I seen it happen

FLOR Oh Sid

SID Sure I know We got the blues Babe—the 1935 blues I'm talkin' this way 'cause I love you If I didn't I wouldn't care

FLOR We'll work together well—

SID How about the backwash? Your family needs your nine bucks My family—

FLOR I don't care for them!

SID You're making it up, Florrie Little Florrie Canary in a cage

FLOR Don't make fun of me

SID I'm not Baby

FLOR Yes you're laughing at me

SID I'm not
(They stand looking at each other unable to speak Finally, he turns to

a small portable phonograph and plays a cheap sad dance tune He makes a motion with his hand she comes to him They begin to dance slowly They hold each other tightly almost as though they would merge into each other The music stops but the scratching record continues to the end of the scene They stop dancing He finally unlooses her clutch and seats her on the couch where she sits tense and expectant)

SID Hello Babe

FLOR Hello (For a brief time they stand as though in a dream)

SID (finally) Good by Babe (He waits for an answer but she is silent They look at each other)

SID Did you ever see my Pat Rooney imitation? (He whistles Rosy O Grady and soft shoes to it Stops He asks)

SID Don't you like it?

FLOR (finally) No (Buries her face in her hands)
(Suddenly he falls on his knees and buries his face in her lap)

BLACKOUT

IV LABOR SPY EPISODE

FATT You don't know how we work for you Shooting off your mouth won't help Hell don't you guys ever look at the records like me? Look in your own industry See what happened when the hacks walked out in Philly three months ago! Where's Philly? A thousand

miles away? An hour's ride on the tram

VOICE Two hours! !

FATT Two hours what the hell's the difference Let's hear from someone who's got the practical ex

perience to back him up Fellers there's a man here who's seen the whole parade in Philly walked out with his pals got knocked down like the rest—and blacklisted after they went back That's why he's here He's got a mighty interest in word to say (*Announces*) TOM CLAYTON! (*As CLAYTON starts up from the audience FATT gives him a hand which is sparsely followed in the audience CLAYTON comes forward*) Fellers this is a man with practical strike experience—Tom Clayton from little ole Philly

CLAYTON (*a thin modest individual*) Fellers I don't mind your booing If I thought it would help us hacks get better living conditions, I'd let you walk all over me cut me up to little pieces I'm one of you myself But what I wanna say is that Harry Fatt's right I only been working here in the big town five weeks but I know conditions just like the rest of you You know how it is—don't take long to feel the sore spots no matter where you park

CLEAR VOICE (*from audience*) Sit down!

CLAYTON But Fatt's right Our officers is right The time ain't ripe Like a fruit don't fall off the tree until it's ripe

CLEAR VOICE Sit down you fruit!

FATT (*on his feet*) Take care of him boys

VOICE (*in audience struggling*) No one takes care of me (*Struggle in house and finally the owner of the voice runs up on stage says to speaker*)

SAME VOICE Where the hell did you pick up that name! Clayton! This rat's name is Clancy from the old Clancys way back! Fruit! I almost wet myself listening to that one!

FATT (*gunman with him*) This ain't a barn! What the hell do you think you're doing here!

SAME VOICE Exposing a rat!

FATT You can't get away with this Throw him the hell outa here

VOICE (*preparing to stand his ground*) Try it yourself When this bozo throws that slop around You know who he is? That's a company spy

FATT Who the hell are you to make —

VOICE I paid dues in this union for four years that's who's me! I gotta right and this pussy footed rat ain't coming in here with ideals like that You know his record Lemme say it out—

FATT You'll prove all this or I'll bust you in every hack outfit in town!

VOICE I gotta right I gotta right Looka *him* he don't say boo!

CLAYTON You're a liar and I never seen you before in my life!

VOICE Boys he spent two years in the coal fields breaking up any organization he touched Fifty gu's he put in jail He's ranged up and down the east coast—shipping textiles steel—he's been in everything you can name Right now—

CLAYTON That's a lie!

VOICE Right now he's working for that Bergman outfit on Columbus Circle who furnishes rats for any outfit in the country before during and after strikes

(The man who is the hero of the next episode goes down to his side with other committee men)

CLAYTON He's trying to break up the meeting fellers!

VOICE We won't search you for credentials

CLAYTON I got nothing to hide Your own secretary knows I'm straight

VOICE Sure Boys you know who this sonovabitch is?

CLAYTON I never seen you before in my life!

VOICE Boys I slept with him in the same bed sixteen years HES MY OWN LOUSY BROTHER!!

FATT *(after pause)* Is this true?
(No answer from CLAYTON)

VOICE to CLAYTON Scram before I break your neck!
(CLAYTON scrams down center aisle)

VOICE *(says watching him)* Remember his map—he can't change that—Clancy! *(Standing in his place says)* Too bad you didn't know about this Fatt! *(After a pause)* The Clancy family tree is bearing nuts!
(Standing isolated clear on the stage is the hero of the next episode)

BLACKOUT

V THE YOUNG ACTOR

A New York theatrical producer's office Present are a stenographer and a young actor She is busy typing he waiting with card in hand

STEN He's taking a hot bath says you should wait

PHILIPS *(the actor)* A bath did you say? Where?

STEN See that door? Right through there—leads to his apartment

PHIL Through there?

STEN Mister he's laying there in a hot perfumed bath Don't say I said it

PHIL You don't say!

STEN An oriental den he's got Can you just see this big Irishman burning Chinese punk in the bedroom? And a big old rose canopy over his casting couch

PHIL What's that—casting couch?

STEN What's that? You from the sticks?

PHIL I beg your pardon?

STEN *(rolls up her sleeves makes elaborate deaf and dumb signs)*

No from side walkies of New Yorkie savvy?

PHIL We don't know where the next meals coming from We——

PHIL Oh you're right Two years of dramatic stock out of town One in Chicago

STEN Maybe I'll lend you a dollar?

STEN Don't tell him Baby Face He wouldn't know a good actor if he fell over him in the dark Say you had two years with the Group two with the Guild

PHIL Thanks very much it won't help

STEN One of the old families of Virginia? Proud?

PHIL I'd like to get with the Guild They say——

PHIL Oh not that You see I have a wife We'll have our first baby next month so a dollar isn't much help

STEN He won't know the difference Don't say I said it!

STEN Roped in?

PHIL I really did play with Watson Findlay in Early Birds

PHIL I love my wife!

STEN (*withering him*) Don't tell him!

STEN Okay you love her! Excuse me! You married her Can't support her No not blaming you But you're fools all you actors Old and young! Watch you parade in and out all day You still got apples in your cheeks and pins for buttons But in six months you'll be like them——putting on an act Phony strutting pisheis——that's French for dead codfish! It's not their fault Here you get like that or go under What kind of job is this for an adult man!

PHIL He's a big producer Mr Grady I wish I had his money Don't you?

STEN Say I got a clean heart Mister I love my fellow man! (*About to exit with typed letters*) Stick around——Mr Philips You might be the type If you were a woman——

PHIL When you have to make a living——

PHIL Please Just a minute please I need the job

STEN Look at him!

STEN I know but——

PHIL I mean I don't know what buttons to push and you do What my father used to say—we had a gas station in Cleveland before the crash—Know what buttons to push Dad used to say and you'll go far

PHIL Nothing else to do If I could get something else——

STEN You'd take it!

PHIL Anything!

STEN You can't push me Mister! I don't ring right these last few years!

STEN Telling me! With two brothers in my hair! (*MR GRADY now en*

ters played by FATT) Mr Brown
sent this young man over

GRADY Call the hospital see how
BORIS IS (She assents and exits)

PHIL Good morning Mr Grady

GRADY The morning is lousy!

PHIL Mr Brown sent me (Hands
over card)

GRADY I heard that once already

PHIL Excuse me

GRADY What experience?

PHIL Oh yes

GRADY Where?

PHIL Two years in stock sir A year
with the Goodman Theatre in Chi
cago

GRADY That all?

PHIL (abashed) Why, no with
the Theatre Guild I was there

GRADY Never saw you in a Guild
show!

PHIL On the road I mean
understudying Mr Lunt

GRADY What part? (PHILIPS can not
answer) You're a lousy liar son

PHIL I did

GRADY You don't look like what I
want Can't understand that Brown
Need a big man to play a soldier
Not a lousy soldier left on Broad

way! All in pictures and we get the
nances! (Turns to work on desk)

PHIL (immediately playing the sol
dier) I was in the ROTC in college
Reserve Officers Training
Corps We trained twice a week

GRADY Won't help

PHIL With real rifles (Waits) Mr
Grady I weigh a hundred and
fifty five!

GRADY How many years back?
Been eating regular since you left
college?

PHIL (very earnestly) Mr Grady
I could act this soldier part I could
build it up and act it Make it
up—

GRADY Think I run a lousy acting
school around here?

PHIL Honest to God I would! I need
the job—that's why I could do it!
I'm strong I know my business!
You'll get an A 1 performance Be
cause I need this job! My wife's
having a baby in a few weeks We
need the money Give me a chance!

GRADY What do I care if you can
act it! I'm sorry about your baby
Use your head son Tank Town
stock is different Here we got in
vestments to be protected When I
sink fifteen thousand in a show I
don't take chances on some young
ster We cast to type!

PHIL I'm an artist! I can—

GRADY That's your headache No
body interested in artists here Get a
big bunch for a nickel on any cor

ner Two flops in a row on this lousy street nobody loves you—only God, and He don't count We protect in vestments we cast to type Your face and height we want not your soul son And Jesus Christ himself couldn't play a soldier in this show with all his talent (*Crosses himself in quick repentance for this remark*)

PHIL Anything a bit a walk-on?

GRADY Sorry small cast (*Looking at papers on his desk*) You try Russia son I hear it's hot stuff over there

PHIL Stage manager? Assistant?

GRADY All filled sonny (*Stands up crumples several papers from the desk*) Better luck next time

PHIL Thanks

GRADY Drop in from time to time (*Crosses and about to exit*) You never know when something—(*The STENOGRAPHER enters with papers to put on desk*) What did the hospital say?

STEN He's much better Mr Grady

GRADY Resting easy?

STEN Dr Martel said Boris is doing even better than he expected

GRADY A damn lousy operation!

STEN Yes

GRADY (*belching*) Tell the nigger boy to send up a bromo seltzer

STEN Yes Mr Grady (*He exits*) Boris wanted lady friends

PHIL What?

STEN So they operated poor dog!

PHIL A dog?

STEN His Russian wolf hound! They do the same to you, but you don't know it! (*Suddenly*) Want advice? In the next office don't let them see you down in the mouth They don't like it—makes them shiver

PHIL You treat me like a human being Thanks

STEN You're human!

PHIL I used to think so

STEN He wants a bromo for his hangover (*Goes to door*) Want that dollar?

PHIL It won't help much

STEN One dollar buys ten loaves of bread Mister Or one dollar buys nine loaves of bread and one copy of The Communist Manifesto Learn while you eat Read while you run

PHIL Manifesto? What's that? (*Takes dollar*) What is that what you said Manifesto?

STEN Stop off on your way out—I'll give you a copy From Genesis to Revelation Comrade Philips!

"And I saw a new earth and a new heaven for the first earth and the first heaven were passed away and there was no more sea

STEN I'm saying the meek shall not inherit the earth!

PHIL No?

STEN The MILITANT! Come out in the light Comrade

PHIL I don't understand that

BLACKOUT

VI INTERNE EPISODE

DR BARNES *an elderly distinguished man is speaking on the telephone*
He wears a white coat

DR BARNES No I gave you my opinion twice You outvoted me You did this to Dr Benjamin yourself That is why you can tell him your self (*Hangs up phone angrily As he is about to pour himself a drink from a bottle on the table a knock is heard*)

BARNES Who is it?

BENJAMIN (*without*) Can I see you a minute please?

BARNES (*hiding the bottle*) Come in Dr Benjamin come in

BENJ It's important—excuse me—they've got Leeds up there in my place—He's operating on Mrs Lewis—the hysterectomy—it's my job I washed up prepared they told me at the last minute I don't mind being replaced Doctor but Leeds is a damn fool! He shouldn't be permitted—

BARNES (*dryly*) Leeds is the nephew of Senator Leeds

BENJ He's incompetent as hell

BARNES (*obviously cringing subject picks up lab jar*) They're do-

ing splendid work in brain surgery these days This is a very fine specimen

BENJ I'm sorry I thought you might be interested

BARNES (*still examining jar*) Well I am young man I am! Only remember it's a charity case!

BENJ Of course They wouldn't allow it for a second otherwise

BARNES Her life is in danger?

BENJ Of course! You know how serious the case is!

BARNES Turn your gimlet eyes else where Doctor Jiggling around like a cricket on a hot grill won't help Doctors don't run these hospitals He's the Senator's nephew and there he stays

BENJ It's too bad

BARNES I'm not calling you down either (*Plopping down jar suddenly*) Goddammit do you think it's my fault?

BENJ (*about to leave*) I know
I'm sorry

BARNES Just a minute Sit down

BENJ Sorry I can't sit

BARNES Stand then!

BENJ (*sits*) Understand Dr
Barnes I don't mind being replaced
at the last minute this way but
well this flagrant bit of class distinc-
tion—because she's poor—

BARNES Be careful of words like
that— class distinction Don't be
long here Lots of energy you bril-
liant young men but idiots Discre-
tion! Ever hear that word?

BENJ Too radical?

BARNES Precisely And some day
like in Germany it might cost you
your head

BENJ Not to mention my job

BARNES So they told you?

BENJ Told me what?

BARNES They're closing Ward C
next month I don't have to tell you
the hospital isn't self supporting
Until last year that board of trustees
met deficits You can guess
the rest At a board meeting Tues-
day our fine feathered friends dis-
covered they couldn't meet the last
quarter's deficit—a neat little sum
well over \$100 000 If the hospital
is to continue at all its damn—

BENJ Necessary to close another
charity ward!

BARNES So they say (*A wait*)

BENJ But that's not all?

BARNES (*ashamed*) Have to cut
down on staff too

BENJ That's too bad Does it touch
me?

BARNES Afraid it does

BENJ But after all I'm top man
here I don't mean I'm better than
others but I've worked harder

BARNES And shown more prom-
ise

BENJ I always supposed they'd cut
from the bottom first

BARNES Usually

BENJ But in this case?

BARNES Complications

BENJ For instance?
(BARNES *hesitant*)

BARNES I like you Benjamin It's
one ripping shame

BENJ I'm no sensitive plant—what's
the answer?

BARNES An old disease malignant
tumescence We need an anti-toxin
for it

BENJ I see

BARNES What?

BENJ I met that disease before—at
Harvard first

BARNES You have seniority here
Benjamin

BENJ But I'm a Jew!
 (BARNES nods his head in agreement BENJ stands there a moment and blows his nose)

BARNES (blows his nose) Microbes!

BENJ Pressure from above?

BARNES Don't think Kennedy and I didn't fight for you!

BENJ Such discrimination with all those wealthy brother Jews on the board?

BARNES I've remarked before—doesn't seem to be much difference between wealthy Jews and rich Gentiles Cut from the same piece!

BENJ For myself I don't feel sorry My parents gave up an awful lot to get me this far They ran a little dry goods shop in the Bronx until their pitiful savings went in the crash last year Poppa's peddling neckties Saul Ezra Benjamin—a man who's read Spinoza all his life

BARNES Doctors don't run medicine in this country The men who know their jobs don't run anything here except the motormen on trolley cars I've seen medicine change—plenty—*anesthesia sterilization*—but not because of rich men—in *spite* of them! In a rich man's country your true self's buried deep Microbes! Less Vermin! See this ankle this delicate sensitive hand? Four hundred years to breed that Out of a revolutionary background! Spirit of '76! Ancestors froze at Valley Forge! What's it all mean! Slops! The honest workers were sold out then in '76 The Constitution's for rich men then and now Slops! (*The phone rings*)

BARNES (*angrily*) Dr Barnes (*listens a moment looks at BENJAMIN*) I see (*Hangs up turns slowly to the younger Doctor*) They lost your patient

BENJ (*stands solid with the shock of this news but finally hurls his operation gloves to the floor*)

BARNES That's right that's right Young hot go and do it! I'm very ancient fossil but life's ahead of you Dr Benjamin and when you fire the first shot say This one's for old Doc Barnes! Too much dignity—bullets Don't shoot vermin! Step on them! If I didn't have an invalid daughter—(BARNES goes back to his seat blows his nose in silence) I have said my piece Benjamin

BENJ Lots of things I wasn't certain of Many things these radicals say you don't believe theories until they happen to you

BARNES You lost a lot today but you won a great point

BENJ Yes to know I'm right? To really begin believing in something? Not to say What a world! but to say Change the world! I wanted to go to Russia Last week I was thinking about it—the wonderful opportunity to do good work in their socialized medicine—

BARNES Beautiful beautiful!

BENJ To be able to work—

BARNES Why don't you go? I might be able—

BENJ Nothing's nearer what I'd like to do!

BARNES Do it!

BENJ No! Our work s here—America! I m scared What future s ahead I don t know Get some job to keep alive—maybe drive a cab—and study and work and learn my place—

BARNES And step down hard!

BENJ Fight! Maybe get killed but goddam! We ll go ahead! (BENJAMIN stands with clenched fist raised high)

BLACKOUT

AGATE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN and don t let anyone tell you we ain t got some ladies in this sea of upturned faces! Only they re wearin pants Well maybe I don t know a thing maybe I fell outa the cradle when I was a kid and ain t been right since—you can t tell!

VOICE Sit down cockey!

AGATE Who s paying you for those remarks Buddy?—Moscow Gold? Maybe I got a *glass eye* but it come from working in a factory at the age of eleven They hooked it out because they didn t have a shield on the works But I wear it like a medal cause it tells the world where I be long—deep down in the working class! We had delegates in the union there—all kinds of secretaries and treasurers walkin delegates but not with blisters on their feet! Oh no! On their fat little ass from sitting on cushions and rakin in mazuma (SECRETARY and GUNMAN remonstrate in words and actions here) Sit down boys I m just sayin that about unions in general I know it ain t true here! Why no our officers is all aces Why I seen our own secretary Fatt walk outa his way not to step on a cockroach No boys don t think—

FATT (breaking in) You re out of order!

AGATE (to audience) Am I outa order?

ALL No no Speak Go on etc

AGATE Yes our officers is all aces But I m a member here—and no experience in Philly either! Today I couldn t wear my union button The damnedest thing happened When I take the old coat off the wall I see she s smoking I m a son ovagun if the old union button isn t on fire! Yep the old celluloid was makin the most god awful stink the landlady come up and give me hell! You know what happened?—that old union button just blushed itself to death! Ashamed! Can you beat it?

FATT Sit down, Keller! Nobodys interested!

AGATE Yes they are!

GUNMAN Sit down like he tells you!

AGATE (continuing to audience) And when I finish— (His speech is broken by FATT and GUNMAN who physically handle him He breaks away and gets to other side of stage The two are about to make for him when some of the committee men come forward and get in between the struggling parties AGATE s shirt has been torn)

AGATE (to audience) What s the answer boys? The answer is if we re reds because we wanna strike

then we take over their salute tool
 Know how they do it? (*Makes
 Communist salute*) What is it? An
 uppercut! The good old uppercut to
 the chin! Hell some of us boys ain't
 even got a shirt to our backs What's
 the boss class tryin' to do—make a
 nudist colony outa us?

(*The audience laughs and suddenly
 AGATE comes to the middle of the
 stage so that the other cabmen back
 him up in a strong clump*)

AGATE Don't laugh! Nothin's
 funny! This is your life and mine!
 It's skull and bones every inch the
 road! Christ we're dyin' by inches!
 For what? For the debutant ees to
 have their sweet comm' out parties
 in the Ritz! Poppa's got a daughter
 she's gotta get her picture in the
 papers Christ they make em with
 our blood Joe said it Slow death
 or fight It's war! (*Throughout this
 whole speech AGATE is backed up
 by the other six workers so that
 from their activity it is plain that the
 whole group of them are saying
 these things Several of them may
 take alternate lines out of this long
 last speech*) You Edna God love
 your mouth! Sid and Florrie the
 other boys old Doc Barnes—fight
 with us for right! It's war! Working
 class unite and fight! Tear down the
 slaughter house of our old lives! Let
 freedom really ring These slick
 slobos stand here telling us about
 bogeymen That's a new one for the
 kids—the reds is bogeymen! But
 the man who got me food in 1932
 he called me Comrade! The one
 who picked me up where I bled—
 he called me Comrade too! What

are we waiting for Don't wait
 for Lefty! He might never come
 Every minute—

(*This is broken into by a man who
 has dashed up the center aisle from
 the back of the house He runs up
 on stage says*)

MAN Boys they just found Lefty!

OTHERS What? What? What?

SOME Shhh Shhh

MAN They found Lefty

AGATE Where?

MAN Behind the car barns with a
 bullet in his head!

AGATE (*crying*) Hear it boys hear
 it? Hell listen to me! Coast to coast!
 HELLO AMERICA! HELLO!
 WE'RE STORMBIRDS OF THE
 WORKING CLASS WORKERS
 OF THE WORLD OUR
 BONES AND BLOOD! And when
 we die they'll know what we did
 to make a new world! Christ cut us
 up to little pieces We'll die for
 what is right! Put fruit trees where
 our ashes are! (*To audience*) Well,
 what's the answer?

ALL STRIKE!

AGATE LOUDER!

ALL STRIKE!

AGATE and OTHERS (*on Stage*)
 AGAIN!

ALL STRIKE STRIKE STRIKE!!!

CURTAIN

NOTES FOR PRODUCTION

The background of the episodes a strike meeting is not an excuse Each of the committeemen shows in his episode the crucial moment of his life which brought him to this very platform The dramatic structure on which the play has been built is simple but highly effective The form used is the old black face minstrel form of chorus end men specialty men and inter locutor

In Fatt's scenes before the Spy Exposé mention should again be made of Lefty's tardiness Sitting next to Fatt in the center of the circle is a little henchman who sits with his back to the audience On the other side of Fatt is Lefty's empty chair This is so indicated by Fatt when he himself asks 'Yeah where's your chairman?

Fatt of course represents the capitalist system throughout the play The audience should constantly be kept aware of him the ugly menace which hangs over the lives of all the people who act out their own dramas Perhaps he puffs smoke into the spotted playing space perhaps during the action of a playlet he might insolently walk in and around the unseeing players It is possible that some highly gratifying results can be achieved by the imaginative use of this character

The strike committee on the platform during the acting out of the playlet should be used as chorus Emotional political musical they have in them possibilities of various comments on the scenes This has been indicated once in the script in the place where Joe's wife is about to leave him In the climaxes of each scene slogans might very effectively be used—a voice coming out of the dark Such a voice might announce at the appropriate moments in the 'Young Internes' scene that the USSR is the only country in the world where Anti Semitism is a crime against the State

Do not hesitate to use music wherever possible It is very valuable in emotionally stirring an audience

Hello Out There

A ONE-ACT PLAY

BY WILLIAM SAROYAN

For George Bernard Shaw

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HELLO OUT THERE

There is a fellow in a small-town prison cell tapping slowly on the floor with a spoon. After tapping half a minute as if he were trying to telegraph words he gets up and begins walking around the cell. At last he stops stands at the center of the cell and doesn't move for a long time. He feels his head as if it were wounded. Then he looks around. Then he calls out dramatically kidding the world

YOUNG MAN Hello—out there!
(Pause) Hello—out there! Hello—
out there! (Long pause) Nobody
out there (Still more dramatically
but more comically too) Hello—
out there! Hello—out there!

(A GIRL'S VOICE is heard very sweet
and soft)
THE VOICE Hello

YOUNG MAN Hello—out there

THE VOICE Hello

YOUNG MAN Is that you, Katey?

THE VOICE No—this here is Emily

YOUNG MAN Who? (Swiftly) Hello
out there

THE VOICE Emily

YOUNG MAN Emily who? I don't
know anybody named Emily. Are
you that girl I met at Sam's in Sal-
inas about three years ago?

THE VOICE No—I'm the girl who
cooks here. I'm the cook. I've never
been in Salinas. I don't even know
where it is.

YOUNG MAN Hello out there. You
say you cook here?

THE VOICE Yes

YOUNG MAN Well, why don't you
study up and learn to cook? How
come I don't get no jello or anything
good?

THE VOICE I just cook what they
tell me to. (Pause) You lonesome!

YOUNG MAN Lonesome as a coyote.
Hear me hollering? Hello out there!

THE VOICE Who you hollering to?

YOUNG MAN Well—nobody. I guess
I been trying to think of somebody
to write a letter to, but I can't think
of anybody.

THE VOICE What about Katey?

YOUNG MAN I don't know anybody,
named Katey.

THE VOICE Then why did you say,
Is that you, Katey?

YOUNG MAN Katey's a good name.
I always did like a name like Katey.
I never *knew* anybody named Katey,
though.

THE VOICE I did.

YOUNG MAN Yeah? What was she
like? Tall girl or little one?

THE VOICE Kind of medium

YOUNG MAN Hello out there What sort of a looking girl are *you*?

THE VOICE Oh I don't know

YOUNG MAN Didn't anybody ever tell you? Didn't anybody ever talk to you that way?

THE VOICE What way?

YOUNG MAN You know Didn't they?

THE VOICE No they didn't

YOUNG MAN Ah the fools—they should have I can tell from your voice you're O K

THE VOICE Maybe I am and maybe I ain't

YOUNG MAN I never missed yet

THE VOICE Yeah I know That's why you're in jail

YOUNG MAN The whole thing was a mistake

THE VOICE They claim it was rape

YOUNG MAN No—it wasn't

THE VOICE That's what they claim it was

YOUNG MAN They're a lot of fools

THE VOICE Well, you sure are in trouble Are you scared?

YOUNG MAN Scared to death (*Suddenly*) Hello out there!

THE VOICE What do you keep saying that for all the time?

YOUNG MAN I'm lonesome I'm as lonesome as a coyote (*A long one*) Hello—out there!

(*THE GIRL appears over to one side She is a plain girl in plain clothes*)
THE GIRL I'm kind of lonesome too

YOUNG MAN (*turning and looking at her*) Hey—No fooling? Are you?

THE GIRL Yeah—I'm almost as lonesome as a coyote myself

YOUNG MAN Who *you* lonesome for?

THE GIRL I don't know

YOUNG MAN It's the same with me The minute they put you in a place like this you remember all the girls you ever knew and all the girls you didn't get to know, and it sure gets lonesome

THE GIRL I bet it does

YOUNG MAN Ah it's awful (*Pause*) You're a pretty kid you know that?

THE GIRL You're just talking

YOUNG MAN No I'm not just talking—you *are* pretty Any fool could see that You're just about the prettiest kid in the whole world

THE GIRL I'm not—and you know it

YOUNG MAN No—you are I never saw anyone prettier in all my born days in all my travels I knew Texas would bring me luck

THE GIRL Luck? You're in jail aren't you? You've got a whole gang of people all worked up haven't you?

YOUNG MAN Ah that's nothing I'll get out of this

THE GIRL Emily Smith

THE GIRL Maybe

YOUNG MAN Honest to God?

YOUNG MAN No I'll be all right—now

THE GIRL Honest That's my name—Emily Smith

THE GIRL What do you mean—now?

YOUNG MAN Ah you're the sweetest girl in the whole world

YOUNG MAN I mean after seeing you I got something now You know for a while there I didn't care one way or another Tired (*Pause*) Tired of trying for the best all the time and never getting it (*Suddenly*) Hello out there!

THE GIRL Why?

YOUNG MAN I don't know why but you are that's all Where were you born?

THE GIRL Who you calling now?

THE GIRL Matador Texas

YOUNG MAN You

YOUNG MAN Where's that?

THE GIRL Why I'm right here

THE GIRL Right here

YOUNG MAN I know (*Calling*) Hello out there!

YOUNG MAN Is this Matador Texas?

THE GIRL Hello

THE GIRL Yeah it's Matador They brought you here from Wheeling

YOUNG MAN Ah you're sweet (*Pause*) I'm going to marry *you* I'm going away with *you* I'm going to take you to San Francisco or some place like that I *am* now I'm going to win myself some real money too I'm going to study 'em real careful and pick myself some winners and we're going to have a lot of money

YOUNG MAN Is that where I was—Wheeling?

THE GIRL Yeah?

THE GIRL Didn't you even know what town you were in?

YOUNG MAN Yeah Tell me your name and all that stuff

YOUNG MAN All towns are alike You don't go up and ask somebody what town you're in It doesn't make any difference How far away is Wheeling?

THE GIRL Emily

THE GIRL Sixteen or seventeen miles Didn't you know they moved you?

YOUNG MAN I know that What's the rest of it? Where were you born? Come on, tell me the whole thing

YOUNG MAN How could I know when I was out—cold? Somebody hit me over the head with a lead pipe or something What'd they hit me for?

THE GIRL Rape—that's what they
said

YOUNG MAN Ah that's a lie
(*Amazed almost to himself*) She
wanted me to give her money

THE GIRL Money?

YOUNG MAN Yeah if I'd have known
she was a woman like that—well by
God I'd have gone on down the
street and stretched out in a park
somewhere and gone to sleep

THE GIRL Is that what she wanted
—money?

YOUNG MAN Yeah A fellow like me
hopping freights all over the coun-
try trying to break his bad luck
going from one poor little town to
another trying to get in on some
thing good somewhere and she asks
for money I thought she was lone-
some She *said* she was

THE GIRL Maybe she was

YOUNG MAN She was *something*

THE GIRL I guess I'd never see you
if it didn't happen though

YOUNG MAN Oh I don't know—
maybe I'd just mosey along this way
and see you in this town somewhere
I'd recognize you too

THE GIRL Recognize me?

YOUNG MAN Sure I'd recognize you
the minute I laid eyes on you

THE GIRL Well who would I be?

YOUNG MAN Mine that's who

THE GIRL Honest?

YOUNG MAN Honest to God

THE GIRL You just say that because
you're in jail

YOUNG MAN No I mean it You just
pack up and wait for me We'll high
roll the hell out of here to Frisco

THE GIRL You're just lonesome

YOUNG MAN I been lonesome all my
life—there's no cure for that—but
you and me—we can have a lot of
fun hanging around together You'll
bring me luck I know it

THE GIRL What are you looking for
luck for all the time?

YOUNG MAN I'm a gambler I don't
work I've *got* to have luck or I'm
a bum I haven't had any decent
luck in years Two whole years now
—one place to another Bad luck all
the time That's why I got in trouble
back there in Wheeling too That
was no accident That was my bad
luck following me around So here I
am with my head half busted I
guess it was her old man that did it

THE GIRL You mean her father?

YOUNG MAN No her husband If I
had an old lady like that, I'd throw
her out

THE GIRL Do you think you'll have
better luck if I go with you?

YOUNG MAN It's a cinch I'm a good
handicapper All I need is somebody
good like you with me It's no good
always walking around in the streets
for anything that might be there at
the time You got to have somebody
staying with you all the time—
through winters when it's cold and

springtime when it's pretty and summertime when it's nice and hot and you can go swimming—through *all* the times—I ain and snow and all the different kinds of weather a man's got to go through before he dies. You got to have somebody who's right. Somebody who knows you from away back. You got to have somebody who even knows you're wrong but likes you just the same. I know I'm wrong but I just don't want anything the hard way working like a dog or the *easy* way working like a dog—working the hard way and the easy way both. All I got to do is beat the price all ways—and then I don't feel lousy and don't hate anybody. If you go along with me I'll be the finest guy anybody ever saw. I won't be wrong any more. You know when you get enough of that money you *can't* be wrong any more—you're right because the money says so. I'll have a lot of money and you'll be just about the prettiest, most wonderful kid in the whole world. I'll be proud walking around Frisco with you on my arm and people turning around to look at us.

THE GIRL Do you think they will?

YOUNG MAN Sure they will. When I get back in some decent clothes and you're on my arm—well, Katey, they'll turn around and look and they'll see something too.

THE GIRL Katey?

YOUNG MAN Yeah—that's your name from now on. You're the first girl I ever called Katey. I've been saving it for you. O K?

THE GIRL O K

YOUNG MAN How long have I been here?

THE GIRL Since last night. You didn't wake up until late this morning though.

YOUNG MAN What time is it now? About nine?

THE GIRL About ten.

YOUNG MAN Have you got the key to this lousy cell?

THE GIRL No. They don't let me fool with any keys.

YOUNG MAN Well, can you get it?

THE GIRL No.

YOUNG MAN Can you *try*?

THE GIRL They wouldn't let me get near any keys. I cook for this jail when they've got somebody in it. I clean up and things like that.

YOUNG MAN Well, I want to get out of here. Don't you know the guy that runs this joint?

THE GIRL I know him but he wouldn't let you out. They were talking of taking you to another jail in another town.

YOUNG MAN Yeah? Why?

THE GIRL Because they're afraid.

YOUNG MAN What are they afraid of?

THE GIRL They're afraid these people from Wheeling will come over in the middle of the night and break in.

YOUNG MAN Yeah? What do they want to do that for?

THE GIRL Don't you know what they want to do it for?

YOUNG MAN Yeah I know all right

THE GIRL Are you scared?

YOUNG MAN Sure I'm scared Nothing scares a man more than ignorance You can argue with people who aren't fools but you can't argue with fools—they just go to work and do what they're set on doing Get me out of here

THE GIRL How?

YOUNG MAN Well, go get the guy with the key and let me talk to him

THE GIRL He's gone home Everybody's gone home

YOUNG MAN You mean I'm in this little jail all alone?

THE GIRL Well—yeah—except me

YOUNG MAN Well what's the big idea—doesn't anybody stay here all the time?

THE GIRL No they go home every night I clean up and then I go too I hung around tonight

YOUNG MAN What made you do that?

THE GIRL I wanted to talk to you

YOUNG MAN Honest? What did you want to talk about?

THE GIRL Oh I don't know I took care of you last night You were talk-

ing in your sleep You liked me too I didn't think you'd like me when you woke up though

YOUNG MAN Yeah? Why not?

THE GIRL I don't know

YOUNG MAN Yeah? Well you're wonderful see?

THE GIRL Nobody ever talked to me that way All the fellows in town—
(Pause)

YOUNG MAN What about em?
(Pause) Well what about em?
Come on—tell me

THE GIRL They laugh at me

YOUNG MAN Laugh at you? They're fools What do they know about anything? You go get your things and come back here I'll take you with me to Frisco How old are you?

THE GIRL Oh I'm of age

YOUNG MAN How old are you?—Don't lie to me! Sixteen?

THE GIRL I'm seventeen

YOUNG MAN Well bring your father and mother We'll get married before we go

THE GIRL They wouldn't let me go

YOUNG MAN Why not?

THE GIRL I don't know but they wouldn't I know they wouldn't

YOUNG MAN You go tell your father not to be a fool, see? What is he, a farmer?

THE GIRL No—nothing He gets a little relief from the government because he's supposed to be hurt or something—his side hurts he says I don't know what it is

YOUNG MAN Ah he's a liar Well I'm taking you with me see?

THE GIRL He takes the money I earn too

YOUNG MAN He's got no right to do that

THE GIRL I know it but he does it

YOUNG MAN (*almost to himself*) This world stinks You shouldn't have been born in this town, any way and you shouldn't have had a man like that for a father either

THE GIRL Sometimes I feel sorry for him

YOUNG MAN Never mind feeling sorry for him (*Pointing a finger*) I'm going to talk to your father some day I've got a few things to tell that guy

THE GIRL I know you have

YOUNG MAN (*suddenly*) Hello—out there! See if you can get that fellow with the keys to come down and let me out

THE GIRL Oh I couldn't

YOUNG MAN Why not?

THE GIRL I'm nobody here—they give me fifty cents every day I work

YOUNG MAN How much?

THE GIRL Fifty cents

YOUNG MAN (*to the world*) You see? They ought to pay money to look at you To breathe the air you breathe I don't know Some times I figure it never is going to make sense Hello—out there! I'm scared You try to get me out of here I'm scared them fools are going to come here from Wheeling and go crazy thinking they're heroes Get me out of here Katey

THE GIRL I don't know what to do Maybe I could break the door down

YOUNG MAN No you couldn't do that Is there a hammer out there or anything?

THE GIRL Only a broom Maybe they've locked the broom up too

YOUNG MAN Go see if you can find anything

THE GIRL All right (*She goes*)

YOUNG MAN Hello—out there! Hello—out there! (*Pause*) Hello—out there! Hello—out there! (*Pause*) Putting me in jail (*With contempt*) Rape! Rape? They rape everything good that was ever born His side hurts They laugh at her Fifty cents a day Little punk people Hurting the only good thing that ever came their way (*Suddenly*) Hello—out there!

THE GIRL (*returning*) There isn't a thing out there They've locked everything up for the night

YOUNG MAN Any cigarettes?

THE GIRL Everything's locked up—all the drawers of the desk, all the closet doors—everything

YOUNG MAN I ought to have a cigarette

THE GIRL I could get you a package maybe somewhere I guess the drug store's open It's about a mile

YOUNG MAN A mile? I don't want to be alone that long

THE GIRL I could run all the way and all the way back

YOUNG MAN You're the sweetest girl that ever lived

THE GIRL What kind do you want?

YOUNG MAN Oh any kind—Ches-terfields or Camels or Lucky Strikes—any kind at all

THE GIRL I'll go get a package (*She turns to go*)

YOUNG MAN What about the money?

THE GIRL I've got some money I've got a quarter I been saving I'll run all the way (*She is about to go*)

YOUNG MAN Come here

THE GIRL (*going to him*) What?

YOUNG MAN Give me your hand (*He takes her hand and looks at it smiling He lifts it and kisses it*) I'm scared to death

THE GIRL I am too

YOUNG MAN I'm not lying—I don't care what happens to me but I'm scared nobody will ever come out here to this God-forsaken broken-down town and find you I'm scared you'll get used to it and not mind I'm scared you'll never get to Frisco

and have 'em all turning around to look at you Listen—go get me a gun, because if they come I'll kill 'em! They don't understand Get me a gun!

THE GIRL I could get my father's gun I know where he hides it

YOUNG MAN Go get it Never mind the cigarettes Run all the way (*Pause smiling but seriously*) Hello Katey

THE GIRL Hello What's your name?

YOUNG MAN Photo Finish is what they call me My races are always photo finish races You don't know what that means but it means they're very close So close the only way they can tell which horse wins is to look at a photograph after the race is over Well every race I bet turns out to be a photo finish race and my horse never wins It's my bad luck all the time That's why they call me Photo Finish Say it before you go

THE GIRL Photo Finish

YOUNG MAN Come here (*THE GIRL moves close and he kisses her*) Now hurry Run all the way

THE GIRL I'll run (*THE GIRL turns and runs* *THE YOUNG MAN stands at the center of the cell a long time* *THE GIRL comes running back in Almost crying*) I'm afraid I'm afraid I won't see you again If I come back and you're not here I—

YOUNG MAN Hello—out there!

THE GIRL It's so lonely in this town Nothing here but the lonesome wind all the time lifting the dirt and

blowing out to the prairie I'll stay
here I won't let them take you
away

YOUNG MAN Listen Katey Do what
I tell you Go get tl at gun and come
back Maybe they won't come to
night Maybe they won't come at all
I'll hide the gun and when they let
me out you can take it back and put
it where you found it And then
we'll go away But if they come I'll
kill em! Now hurry—

THE GIRL All right (*Pause*) I want
to tell you something

YOUNG MAN O K

THE GIRL (*very softly*) If you're not
here when I come back well I'll
have the gun and I'll know what to
do with it

YOUNG MAN You know how to han-
dle a gun?

THE GIRL I know how

YOUNG MAN Don't be a fool (*Takes
off his shoe brings out some cur-
rency*) Don't be a fool, see? Here's
some money Eighty dollars Take it
and go to Frisco Look around and
find somebody Find somebody
alive and halfway human see?
Promise me—if I'm not here when
you come back just throw the gun
away and get the hell to Frisco
Look around and find somebody

THE GIRL I don't want to find any
body

YOUNG MAN (*swiftly desperately*)
Listen if I'm not here when you
come back how do you know I
haven't gotten away? Now do what

I tell you I'll meet you in Frisco
I've got a couple of dollars in my
other shoe I'll see you in San Fran-
cisco

THE GIRL (*with wonder*) San Fran-
cisco?

YOUNG MAN That's right—San
Francisco That's where you and me
belong

THE GIRL I've always wanted to go
to *some* place like San Francisco—
but how could I go alone?

YOUNG MAN Well you're not alone
any more see?

THE GIRL Tell me a little what it's
like

YOUNG MAN (*very swiftly almost
impatiently at first but gradually
slower and with remembrance
smiling and THE GIRL moving closer
to him as he speaks*) Well it's on
the Pacific to begin with—ocean
water all around Cool fog and sea-
gulls Ships from all over the world
It's got seven hills The little streets
go up and down around and all
over Every night the fog horns
bawl But they won't be bawling for
you and me

THE GIRL What else?

YOUNG MAN That's about all I
guess

THE GIRL Are people different in
San Francisco?

YOUNG MAN People are the same
everywhere They're different only
when they love somebody That's
the only thing that makes em dif-

ferent More people in Frisco love somebody that s all

THE GIRL Nobody anywhere loves anybody as much as I love you

YOUNG MAN (*shouting as if to the world*) You see? Hearing you say that a man could die and still be ahead of the game Now hurry And dont forget if I m not here when you come back get the hell to San Francisco where you ll have a chance Do you hear me?

(THE GIRL stands a moment looking at him then backs away turns and runs The YOUNG MAN stares after her troubled and smiling Then he turns away from the image of her and walks about like a lion in a cage After a while he sits down suddenly and buries his head in his hands From a distance the sound of several automobiles approaching is heard He listens a moment then ignores the implications of the sound whatever they may be Several automobile doors are slammed He ignores this also A wooden door is opened with a key and closed and footsteps are heard in a hall Walking easily almost casually and yet arrogantly a MAN comes in The YOUNG MAN jumps up suddenly and shouts at the MAN almost scaring him) What the hell kind of a jail keeper are you anyway? Why dont you attend to your business? You get paid for it dont you? Now get me out of here

THE MAN But I m not the jail keeper

YOUNG MAN Yeah? Well who are you then?

THE MAN I m the husband

YOUNG MAN What husband you talking about?

THE MAN You know what husband

YOUNG MAN Hey! (*Pause looking at THE MAN*) Aie you the guy that hit me over the head last night?

THE MAN I am

YOUNG MAN (*with righteous indignation*) What do you mean going around hitting people over the head?

THE MAN Oh I dont know What do you mean going around—the way you do?

YOUNG MAN (*rubbing his head*) You hurt my head You got no right to hit anybody over the head

THE MAN (*suddenly angry shouting*) Answer my question! What do you mean?

YOUNG MAN Listen you—dont be hollering at me just because I m locked up

THE MAN (*with contempt slowly*) You re a dog!

YOUNG MAN Yeah, Well let me tell you something You *think* you re the husband You re the husband of nothing (*Slowly*) What s more your wife—if you want to call her that—is a tramp Why dont you throw her out in the street where she belongs?

THE MAN (*draws a pistol*) Shut up!

YOUNG MAN Yeah? Go ahead shoot —(*Softly*) and spoil the fun

What'll your pals think? They'll be disappointed won't they? What's the fun hanging a man who's already dead? (THE MAN *puts the gun away*) That's right because now you can have some fun yourself telling me what you're going to do. That's what you came here for isn't it? Well you don't need to tell me I *know* what you're going to do. I've read the papers and I know. They have fun. A mob of 'em fall on one man and beat him don't they? They tear off his clothes and kick him don't they? And women and little children stand around watching don't they? Well before you go on *this* picnic I'm going to tell you a few things. Not that that's going to send you home with your pals—the other heroes. No. You've been outraged. A stranger has come to town and violated your women. Your pure innocent virtuous women. You fellows have got to set this thing right. You're men not mice. You're home-makers and you beat your children. (*Suddenly*) Listen you—I didn't know she was your wife. I didn't know she was anybody's wife.

THE MAN You're a liar!

YOUNG MAN Sometimes—when it'll do somebody some good—but not this time. Do you want to hear about it? (THE MAN *doesn't answer*) All right. I'll tell you. I met her at a lunch counter. She came in and sat next to me. There was plenty of room but she sat next to me. Somebody had put a nickel in the phonograph and a fellow was singing *New San Antonio Rose*. Well she got to talking about the song. I thought she was talking to the waiter but *he* didn't answer her so after a while I answered her. That's

how I met her. I didn't think any thing of it. We left the place together and started walking. The first thing I knew she said. This is where I live.

THE MAN You're a dirty liar!

YOUNG MAN Do you want to hear it? Or not? (THE MAN *does not answer*) O.K. She asked me to come in. Maybe she had something in mind. Maybe she didn't. Didn't make any difference to me one way or the other. If she was lonely all right. If not, all right.

THE MAN You're telling a lot of dirty lies!

YOUNG MAN I'm telling the truth. Maybe your wife's out there with your pals. Well call her in. I got nothing against her or you—or any of you. Call her in and ask her a few questions. Are you in love with her? (THE MAN *doesn't answer*) Well that's too bad.

THE MAN What do you mean too bad?

YOUNG MAN I mean this may not be the first time something like this has happened.

THE MAN (*swiftly*) Shut up!

YOUNG MAN Oh you know it. You've always known it. You're afraid of your pals that's all. She asked me for money. That's all she wanted. I wouldn't be here now if I had given her the money.

THE MAN (*slowly*) How much did she ask for?

YOUNG MAN I didn't ask her how much I told her I'd made a mistake She said she would make trouble if I didn't give her money Well I don't like bargaining and I don't like being threatened either I told her to get the hell away from me The next thing I knew she'd run out of the house and was hollering (Pause) Now why don't you go out there and tell 'em they took me to another jail—go home and pack up and leave her You're a pretty good guy you're just afraid of your pals (THE MAN draws his gun again He is very frightened He moves a step toward the YOUNG MAN then fires three times The YOUNG MAN falls to his knees THE MAN turns and runs horrified) Hello—out there! (He is bent forward THE GIRL comes running in and halts suddenly looking at him)

THE GIRL There were some people in the street, men and women and kids—so I came in through the back through a window I couldn't find the gun I looked all over but I couldn't find it What's the matter?

YOUNG MAN Nothing—nothing Everything's all right Listen Listen kid Get the hell out of here Go out the same way you came in and run—run like hell—run all night Get to another town and get on a train Do you hear me?

THE GIRL What's happened?

YOUNG MAN Get away—just get away from here Take any train that's going—you can get to Frisco later

THE GIRL (almost sobbing) I don't want to go any place without you

YOUNG MAN I can't go Something's happened (He looks at her) But I'll be with you always—God damn it Always! (He falls forward THE GIRL stands near him then begins to sob softly walking away She stands over to one side stops sobbing and stares out The excitement of the mob outside increases THE MAN with two of his pals, comes running in THE GIRL watches, unseen)

THE MAN Here's the son of a bitch!

ANOTHER MAN O.K. Open the cell Harry
(The THIRD MAN goes to the cell door unlocks it and swings it open)
(A WOMAN comes running in)

THE WOMAN Where is he? I want to see him Is he dead? (Looking down at him, as the MEN pick him up) There he is (Pause) Yeah that's him (Her husband looks at her with contempt then at the dead man)

THE MAN (trying to laugh) All right—let's get it over with

THIRD MAN Right you are George Give me a hand Harry
(They lift the body)

THE GIRL (suddenly fiercely) Put him down!

THE MAN What's this?

SECOND MAN What are you doing here? Why aren't you out in the street?

THE GIRL Put him down and go away (She runs toward the MEN THE WOMAN grabs her)

THE WOMAN Here—where do you
think *you're* going?

pushes her to the floor) Listen to
the little slut will you?

THE GIRL Let me go You've no
right to take him away

*(They all go carrying the YOUNG
MAN'S body THE GIRL gets up
slowly no longer sobbing She looks
around at everything then looks
straight out and whispers)*

THE WOMAN Well listen to her will
you? *(She slaps THE GIRL and*

THE GIRL Hello—out—there! Hello
—out there!

Bury the Dead

BY IRWIN SHAW

*what is this world that
you cling to it?*

TO MY MOTHER

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CHARACTERS

PRIVATE DRISCOLL
PRIVATE MORGAN
PRIVATE LEVY
PRIVATE WEBSTER
PRIVATE SCHELLING
PRIVATE DEAN
JOAN BURKE
BESS SCHELLING
MARTHA WEBSTER
JULIA BLAKE
KATHERINE DRISCOLL
ELIZABETH DEAN

GENERALS ONE TWO AND THREE

A CAPTAIN A SERGEANT AND FOUR INFANTRYMEN *employed as a burial detail*

A PRIEST A RABBI A DOCTOR

A REPORTER AND AN EDITOR

TWO WHORES

TIME—*The second year of the war that is to begin tomorrow night*

SCENE—*The stage is in two planes—in the foreground the bare stage in the rear not too far back, going the entire length of the stage a platform about seven feet above the level of the stage proper. No properties are used to adorn the stage save for some sandbags whole and split lying along the edge of the raised platform and some loose dirt also on the platform. The entire platform is painted dull black. It is lighted by a strong spotlight thrown along it at hip height from the right wing. It is the only light on the stage. The platform is to represent a torn over battlefield now quiet some miles behind the present lines where a burial detail standing in a shallow trench dug in the platform so that the audience sees them only from the hip up are digging a common grave to accommodate six bodies piled on the right of the platform wrapped in canvas. A SERGEANT stands on the right on the edge of the grave smoking. The SOLDIER nearest him, in the shallow trench, stops his digging.*

BURY THE DEAD

FIRST SOLDIER Say Sergeant, they stink (*Waving his shovel at the corpses*) Let's bury them in a hurry

SERGEANT What the hell do you think you'd smell like after you'd been lyin' out for two days—a god damn hilly of the valley? They'll be burned soon enough Keep digging

SECOND SOLDIER (*scratching himself*) Dig and scratch! Dig and scratch! What a war! When you're not diggin' trenches you're diggin' graves

THIRD SOLDIER Who's got a cigarette? I'll take opium if nobody's got a cigarette

SECOND SOLDIER When you're not diggin' graves you're scratchin' at fleas By God there're more fleas in this army than

FIRST SOLDIER That's what the war's made for—the fleas Somebody's got to feed 'em

FOURTH SOLDIER I used to take a shower every day Can you imagine?

SERGEANT All right, Mr. Lifebuoy we'll put your picture in the *Saturday Evening Post*—in color!

SECOND SOLDIER When you're not scratchin' at fleas you're bein' killed That's a helluva life for a grown man

THIRD SOLDIER Who's got a cigarette? I'll trade my rifle—if I can find it—for a cigarette For Christ's sake don't they make cigarettes no more? (*Leaning melancholy on his shovel*) This country's goin' to the dogs for real now

SERGEANT Lift dirt soldier Come on! This ain't no vacation

THIRD SOLDIER (*disregarding him*) I heard of guys packin' weeds and cowflop into cigarettes in this man's army They say it has a tang (*Reflectively*) Got to try it some day

SERGEANT Hurry up! (*Blowing on his hands*) I'm freezin' here I don't want to hang around all night I can't feel my feet no more

FOURTH SOLDIER I ain't felt my feet for two weeks I ain't had my shoes off in two weeks (*Leaning on his shovel*) I wonder if the toes're still connected I wear a 8A shoe Aristocratic foot the salesman always said Funny—going around not even knowin' whether you still got toes or not It's not hygienic really

SERGEANT All right friend, we'll make sure the next war you're in is run hygienic

FOURTH SOLDIER In the Spanish American War more men died of fever than

FIRST SOLDIER (*beating viciously at*

something in the grave) Get him!
Get him! Kill the bastard!

FOURTH SOLDIER (*savagely*) He's
coming this way! We got him cor-
nered!

FIRST SOLDIER Bash his brains out!

SECOND SOLDIER You got him with
that one! (*All the soldiers in the
grave beat at it yelling demoni-
cally triumphantly*)

SERGEANT (*remonstrating*) Come
on now you're wasting time

FIRST SOLDIER (*swinging savagely*)
There That fixed him The god-
damn

FOURTH SOLDIER (*sadly*) You'd
think the rats'd at least wait until
the stiffs were underground

FIRST SOLDIER Did you ever see
such a fat rat in your whole life? I
bet he ate like a horse—this one

SERGEANT All right all right You're
not fightin' the war against rats Get
back to your business

FIRST SOLDIER I get a lot more pleas-
ure killin' rats than killin' them
(*Gesture toward the front lines*)

SERGEANT Rats got to live too
They don't know no better

FIRST SOLDIER (*suddenly scooping
up rat on his shovel and presenting
it to SERGEANT*) Here you are Ser-
geant A little token of our regard
from Company A

SERGEANT Stop the smart stuff! I
don't like it

FIRST SOLDIER (*still with rat upheld
on shovel*) Ah Sergeant I'm dis-
appointed This rat's a fine pedi-
greed animal—fed only on the
choicest young men the United
States turned out in the last twenty
years

SERGEANT Come on wise guy
(*FIRST SOLDIER goes right on*)

FIRST SOLDIER Notice the heavy
powerful shoulders to this rat no-
tice the well covered flanks notice
the round belly—bank clerks me-
chanics society leaders farmers—
good feeding— (*Suddenly he
throws the rat away*) Ah—I'm get-
tin' awful tired of this I didn't enlist
in this bloody war to be no bloody
grave digger!

SERGEANT Tell that to the Presi-
dent Keep diggin'

SECOND SOLDIER Say this is deep
enough What're we supposed to do
—dig right down to hell and de-
liver them over first hand?

SERGEANT A man's entitled to six
feet a dirt over his face We gotta
show respect to the dead Keep dig-
gin'

FOURTH SOLDIER I hope they don't
put me too far under when my turn
comes I want to be able to come up
and get a smell of air every once in
so often

SERGEANT Stow the gab, you guys!
Keep diggin'

FIRST SOLDIER They stunk! Bury
them!

SERGEANT All right Fanny From
now on we'll perfume 'em before

we ask you to put them away Will that please you?

FIRST SOLDIER I don't like the way they smell that's all I don't have to like the way they smell do I? That ain't in the regulations is it? A man's got a right to use his nose ain't he even though he's in this god damn army

SERGEANT Talk respectful when you talk about the army you!

FIRST SOLDIER Oh, the lovely army
(*He heaves up clod of dirt*)

SECOND SOLDIER Oh the dear army
(*He heaves up clod of dirt*)

THIRD SOLDIER Oh the sweet army
(*He heaves up clod of dirt*)

FIRST SOLDIER Oh the scummy stinking god damn army
(*He heaves up three shovelfuls in rapid succession*)

SERGEANT That's a fine way to talk in the presence of death

FIRST SOLDIER We'd talk in blank verse for you Sergeant only we ran out of it our third day in the front line What do you expect, Sergeant we're just common soldiers

SECOND SOLDIER Come on Let's put 'em away I'm getting blisters big enough to use for balloons here What's the difference? They'll just be turned up anyway the next time the artillery wakes up

SERGEANT All right! All right! If you're in such a hurry—put 'em in
(*The SOLDIERS nearest the right hand edge of the grave jump out and start carrying the bodies*

over one at each corner of the canvas The other SOLDIERS still in the trench take the bodies from them and carry them over to the other side of the trench where they lay them down out of sight of the audience)

SERGEANT Put 'em in neat there

FIRST SOLDIER File 'em away alphabetically boys We may want to refer to them later The General might want to look up some past cases

FOURTH SOLDIER This one's just a kid I knew him a little Nice kid He used to write dirty poems Funny as hell He don't even look dead

FIRST SOLDIER Bury him! He stinks!

SERGEANT If you think you smell so sweet yourself Baby you oughta wake up You ain't exactly a perfume ad soldier (*Laughter*)

THIRD SOLDIER Chalk one up for the Sergeant

FIRST SOLDIER You ain't a combination of roses and wistaria either Sergeant but I can stand you especially when you don't talk At least you're alive There's something about the smell of dead ones that gives me the willies Come on let's pile the dirt in on them
(*The SOLDIERS scramble out of the grave*)

SERGEANT Hold it

THIRD SOLDIER What's the matter now? Do we have to do a dance around them?

SERGEANT We have to wait for chaplains They gotta say some prayers over them

FIRST SOLDIER Oh for Christ's sake ain't I ever going to get any sleep tonight?

SERGEANT Don't begrudge a man his prayers soldier You'd want 'em wouldn't you?

FIRST SOLDIER God no I want to sleep peaceful when I go Well where are they? Why don't they come? Do we have to stand here all night waiting for those guys to come and talk to God about these fellers?

THIRD SOLDIER Who's got a cigarette? (*Plaintively*)

SERGEANT Attention! Here they are! (*A Roman Catholic PRIEST and a RABBI come in*)

PRIEST Is everything ready?

SERGEANT Yes Father

FIRST SOLDIER Make it snappy! I'm awful tired

PRIEST God must be served slowly my son

FIRST SOLDIER He's gettin' plenty of service these days—and not so slow either He can stand a little rushin'

SERGEANT Shut up soldier

RABBI Do you want to hold your services first Father?

SERGEANT There ain't no Jewish hoys in there (*Gesture to grave*)

Reverend I don't think we'll need you

RABBI I understand one of them is named Levy

SERGEANT Yes But he's no Jew

RABBI With that name we won't take any chances Father will you be first?

PRIEST Perhaps we had better wait There is an Episcopal bishop in this sector He expressed the desire to conduct a burial service here He's doing that in all the sectors he is visiting I think we had better wait for him Episcopal bishops are rather sensitive about order

RABBI He's not coming He's having his supper

FIRST SOLDIER What does God do while the bishop has his supper?

SERGEANT If you don't keep quiet I'll bring you up on charges

FIRST SOLDIER I want to get it over with! Bury them! They stink!

PRIEST Young man that is not the way to talk about one of God's creatures

FIRST SOLDIER If *that's* (*gesture to grave*) one of God's creatures, all I can say is He's slippin'

PRIEST Ah my son you seem so bitter

FIRST SOLDIER For God's sake, stop talking and get this over with I want to throw dirt over them! I can't stand the smell of them! Sergeant get 'em to do it fast They ain't got

no right to keep us up all night We
got work to do tomorrow Let
em say their prayers together!
God ll be able to understand

PRIEST Yes There is really no need
to prolong it We must think of the
living as well as the dead As he
says Reverend God will be able to
understand

*(He stands at the head of the grave
chants the Latin prayer for the dead
The RABBI goes around to the other
end and recites the Hebrew prayer
In the middle of it a groan is heard
low but clear The chants keep on
Another groan is heard)*

FIRST SOLDIER *(while the Hebrew
and Latin go on)* I heard a groan
(The RABBI and PRIEST continue) I
heard a groan!

SERGEANT Shut up soldier!
(The Latin and Hebrew go on)

FIRST SOLDIER *(gets down on one
knee by side of grave and listens
Another groan)* Stop it! I heard a
groan

SERGEANT What about it? Can you
have war without groans? Keep
quiet!
*(The prayers go on undisturbed
Another groan The FIRST SOLDIER
jumps into the grave)*

FIRST SOLDIER Its from here!
Hold it! *(Screaming)* Hold it! Stop
those god damned parrots! *(Throws
a clod of dirt at end of trench)*
Hold it! Somebody down here
groaned
*(A head appears slowly above the
trench rim at the left end a man
stands up slowly facing the rear All
the men sigh—the service goes on)*

SERGEANT Oh my God

FIRST SOLDIER Hes alive

SERGEANT Why the hell don t they
get these things straight? Pull him
out!

FIRST SOLDIER Stop them! *(As the
services go on)* Get them out of
here! Live men don t need them

SERGEANT Please Father this has
nothing to do with you.
There s been some mistake

PRIEST I see All right Sergeant
*(He and RABBI join hand in hand
and leave Nobody notices them All
the men are hypnotically watching
the man in the trench arisen from
the dead The CORPSE passes his
hand over his eyes The men sigh—
horrible dry sighs Another
groan is heard from the left side of
the trench)*

FIRST SOLDIER *(in trench)* There!
(Pointing) It came from there! I
heard it! *(A head then shoulders
appear over the rim of trench at left
side The SECOND CORPSE stands up
passes his hands over eyes in same
gesture which drew sighs from the
men before There is absolute si-
lence as the men watch the arisen
corpses Then silently a corpse rises
in the middle of the trench next to
the FIRST SOLDIER The FIRST SOL-
DIER screams scrambles out of the
trench in rear and stands bent over
watching the trench middle rear
There is no sound save the very light
rumble of the guns One by one the
CORPSES arise and stand silently in
their places facing the rear their
backs to the audience The SOLDIERS
don t move, scarcely breathe as one*

by one the CORPSES appear They stand there a frozen tableau Suddenly the SERGEANT talks)

SERGEANT What do you want?

FIRST CORPSE Don't bury us

THIRD SOLDIER Let's get the hell out of here!

SERGEANT (*drawing pistol*) Stay where you are! I'll shoot the first man that moves

FIRST CORPSE Don't bury us We don't want to be buried

SERGEANT Christ! (*To men*) Carry on! (*The men stand still*) Christ! (*The SERGEANT rushes off calling*) Captain! Captain! Where the hell is the Captain? (*His voice fades terror stricken The SOLDIERS watch the CORPSES then slowly all together start to back off*)

SIXTH CORPSE Don't go away

SECOND CORPSE Stay with us

THIRD CORPSE We want to hear the sound of men talking

SIXTH CORPSE Don't be afraid of us

FIRST CORPSE We're not really different from you We're dead

SECOND CORPSE That's all ?

FOURTH CORPSE All—all

FIRST SOLDIER That's all ?

THIRD CORPSE Are you afraid of six dead men? You who've lived with the dead the so many dead and eaten your bread by their side when

there was no time to bury them and you were hungry?

SECOND CORPSE Are we different from you? An ounce or so of lead in our hearts and none in yours A small difference between us

THIRD CORPSE Tomorrow or the next day the lead will be yours too Talk as our equals

FOURTH SOLDIER It's the kid—the one who wrote the dirty poems

FIRST CORPSE Say something to us Forget the grave as we would for get it

THIRD SOLDIER Do you—do you want a cigarette?
(SERGEANT *re enters with CAPTAIN*)

SERGEANT I'm not drunk! I'm not crazy either! They just—got up all together—and looked at us Look—look for yourself Captain! (*The CAPTAIN stands off to one side looking The men stand at attention*)

SERGEANT See?

CAPTAIN I see (*He laughs sadly*) I was expecting it to happen—some day So many men each day It's too bad it had to happen in my company Gentlemen! At ease! (*The men stand at ease The CAPTAIN leaves The guns roar suddenly Fadeout*)
(*The spotlight is turned on to the lower stage right below the platform on which the action until now has taken place Discovered in its glare are three GENERALS around a table The CAPTAIN is standing before them talking*)

CAPTAIN I'm only telling the Generals what I saw

FIRST GENERAL You're not making this up Captain?

CAPTAIN No General

SECOND GENERAL Have you any proof Captain?

CAPTAIN The four men in the burial detail and the Sergeant Sir

THIRD GENERAL In time of war Captain men see strange things

CAPTAIN Yes General

SECOND GENERAL You've been drinking Captain

CAPTAIN Yes General

SECOND GENERAL When a man has been drinking he is not responsible for what he sees

CAPTAIN Yes General I am not responsible for what I saw I am glad of that I would not like to carry that burden along with all the others

FIRST GENERAL Come come Captain confess now You were drinking and you walked out into the cold air over a field just lately won and what with the liquor and the air and the flush of victory

CAPTAIN I told the General what I saw

SECOND GENERAL Yes, we heard We forgive you for it We don't think any the worse of you for taking a nip It's only natural We understand So take another drink with us now and forget your ghosts

CAPTAIN They weren't ghosts They were men—killed two days standing in their graves and looking at me

FIRST GENERAL Captain you're becoming trying

CAPTAIN I'm sorry Sir It was a trying sight I saw them and what are the Generals going to do about it?

SECOND GENERAL Forget it! A man is taken for dead and put in a grave He wakes from his coma and stands up It happens every day—you've got to expect such things in a war Take him out and send him to a hospital!

CAPTAIN Hospitals aren't for dead men What are the Generals going to do about them?

THIRD GENERAL Don't stand there croaking What are the Generals going to do about them? Have 'em examined by a doctor If they're alive send them to a hospital If they're dead bury them! It's very simple

CAPTAIN But

THIRD GENERAL No buts Sir!

CAPTAIN Yes Sir

THIRD GENERAL Take a doctor down with you Sir and a stenographer Have the doctor dictate official reports Have them witnessed And let's hear no more of it

CAPTAIN Yes Sir Very good Sir (*Wheels to go out*)

SECOND GENERAL Oh and Captain

CAPTAIN (*stopping*) Yes Sir

SECOND GENERAL Stay away from the bottle

CAPTAIN Yes Sir Is that all Sir?

SECOND GENERAL That's all

CAPTAIN Yes Sir

(The light fades from the GENERALS. It follows the CAPTAIN as he walks across stage. The CAPTAIN stops, takes out a bottle. Takes two long swigs. Blackout.)

(The guns rumble growing louder. They have been almost mute during GENERALS' scene. The light is thrown on the burial scene again where the DOCTOR is seen examining the CORPSES in their graves. The DOCTOR is armed with a stethoscope and is followed by a soldier. STENOGRAPHER two of the SOLDIERS impressed as witnesses and the CAPTAIN. The DOCTOR is talking as he passes from the first man.)

DOCTOR Number one Evisceration of the lower intestine Dead forty eight hours

STENOGRAPHER (*repeating*) Number one Evisceration of the lower intestine Dead forty eight hours (*To witnesses*) Sign here (*They sign*)

DOCTOR (*on the next man*) Number two Bullet penetrated the left ventricle Dead forty eight hours

STENOGRAPHER Number two Bullet penetrated the left ventricle Dead forty-eight hours (*To witnesses*) Sign here (*They sign*)

DOCTOR (*on the next CORPSE*) Number three Bullets penetrated

both lungs Severe hemorrhages Dead forty eight hours

STENOGRAPHER (*chanting*) Number three Bullets penetrated both lungs Severe hemorrhages Dead forty eight hours Sign here (*The witnesses sign*)

DOCTOR (*on next CORPSE*) Number four Fracture of the skull and avulsion of the cerebellum Dead forty eight hours

STENOGRAPHER Number four Fracture of the skull and avulsion of the cerebellum Dead forty eight hours Sign here (*The witnesses sign*)

DOCTOR (*moving on to next CORPSE*) Number five Destruction of the genito urinary system by shell splinters Death from hemorrhages Dead forty eight hours Ummn (*Looks curiously at CORPSE's face*) Hum (*Moves on*)

STENOGRAPHER Number five Destruction of the genito urinary system by shell splinters Death from hemorrhages Dead forty eight hours Sign here (*The witnesses sign*)

DOCTOR (*on the next CORPSE*) Number six Destruction of right side of head from supra orbital ridges through jaw bone Hum You'd be a pretty sight for your mother you would Dead forty eight hours

STENOGRAPHER Number six Destruction of right side of head from supra orbital ridges through jawbone You'd be a pretty sight for your mother, you would Dead forty eight hours Sign here

DOCTOR What are you doing there?

DOCTOR Yes Sir

STENOGRAPHER That's what you said Sir

FIRST GENERAL In your reports here you say each of these six men is dead

DOCTOR I know Leave out—
You'd be a pretty sight for your mother you would The Generals wouldn't be interested in that

DOCTOR Yes Sir

FIRST GENERAL Then I don't see what all the fuss is about Captain They're dead—bury them

STENOGRAPHER Yes Sir Sign here
(*The witnesses sign*)

CAPTAIN I am afraid Sir that that can't be done They are standing in their graves They refuse to be buried

DOCTOR Six is that all?

THIRD GENERAL Do we have to go into that again? We have the doctor's report They're dead Aren't they, Doctor?

CAPTAIN Yes Doctor They're all dead?

(*The FOURTH CORPSE offers the THIRD SOLDIER a cigarette The THIRD SOLDIER hesitates a second before taking it then accepts it with a half grin*)

DOCTOR Yes Sir

THIRD SOLDIER Thanks Buddy I—I'm awful sorry—I—Thanks
(*He saves cigarette*)

THIRD GENERAL Then they aren't standing in their graves, refusing to be buried are they?

DOCTOR (*eyes on FOURTH CORPSE and THIRD SOLDIER*) All dead

DOCTOR Yes, Sir

CAPTAIN A drink Doctor?

SECOND GENERAL Doctor would you know a dead man if you saw one?

DOCTOR Yes thank you (*He takes the proffered bottle Drinks long from it Holds it puts stethoscope in pocket with other hand Stands looking at the CORPSES lined up facing the rear nods then takes another long drink Silently hands bottle to CAPTAIN who looks around him from one CORPSE to another then takes a long drink Blackout*)
(*Spotlight on the GENERALS facing the CAPTAIN and the DOCTOR The FIRST GENERAL has the DOCTOR'S reports in his hands*)

DOCTOR The symptoms are easily recognized

FIRST GENERAL You've been drinking too

DOCTOR Yes Sir

FIRST GENERAL The whole damned army is drunk! I want a regulation announced tomorrow morning in all regiments No more liquor is to be allowed within twenty miles of the front line upon pain of death Got it?

FIRST GENERAL Doctor!

SECOND GENERAL Yes General But then how ll we get the men to fight?

FIRST GENERAL Damn the fighting! We can't have stories like this springing up It's bad for the morale! Did you hear me Doctor it's bad for the morale and you ought to be ashamed of yourself!

DOCTOR Yes Sir

THIRD GENERAL This has gone far enough If it goes any farther the men will get wind of it We have witnessed certificates from a registered surgeon that these men are dead Bury them! Waste no more time on it Did you hear me Captain?

CAPTAIN Yes Sir I'm afraid Sir that I must refuse to bury these men

THIRD GENERAL That's insubordination Sir

CAPTAIN I'm sorry Sir It is not within the line of my military duties to bury men against their will If the General will only think for a moment he will see that this is impossible

FIRST GENERAL The Captain's right It might get back to Congress God only knows what *they'd* make of it!

THIRD GENERAL What are we going to do then?

FIRST GENERAL Captain what do you suggest?

CAPTAIN Stop the war

CHORUS OF GENERALS Captain!

FIRST GENERAL (*with great dignity*) Captain we beg of you to remember the gravity of the situation It admits of no levity Is that the best suggestion you can make Captain?

CAPTAIN Yes But I have another—If the Generals would come down to the grave themselves and attempt to influence these—ah—corpses—to lie down perhaps that would prove effective We're seven miles behind the line now and we could screen the roads to protect your arrival

FIRST GENERAL (*coughing*) Umm—uh—usually of course that would be—uh Well see In the meantime it must be kept quiet! Remember that! Not a word! No body must know! God only knows what would happen if people began to suspect we couldn't even get our dead to lie down and be buried! This is the god damndest war! They never said anything about this sort of thing at West Point Remember not a word nobody must know quiet as the grave *mum!* *ssssh!* (*All the GENERALS repeat the ssssh after him*)

(*The light fades—but the hiss of the GENERALS hushing each other is still heard as the light falls on another part of the stage proper where two soldiers are on post in the front lines behind a barricade of sandbags The sound of guns is very strong There are flashes of gun fire*)

BEVINS (*a soldier past forty fat with a pot belly and graying hair showing under his helmet*) Did you hear about those guys that won't let themselves be buried Charley?

CHARLEY I heard You never know what's gonna happen next in this lousy war

BEVINS What do you think about it Charley?

CHARLEY What're they gettin out of it that's what I'd like to know They're just makin things harder I heard all about em They stunk! Bury em That's what I say

BEVINS I don't know Charley I kinda can see what they're aimin at Christ I wouldn't like to be put six foot under now I wouldn't What the hell for?

CHARLEY What's the difference?

BEVINS There's a difference all right It's kinda good bein alive It's kinda nice bein on top of the earth and seein things and hearin things and smellin things

CHARLEY Yeah smellin stiffs that ain't had time to be buried That sure is sweet

BEVINS Yeah but it's better than havin the dirt packed onto your face I guess those guys felt sorta gypped when they started throwin the dirt in on em and they just couldn't stand it, dead or no dead

CHARLEY They're dead ain't they? Nobody's puttin them under while they're alive

BEVINS It amounts to the same thing Charley They should be alive now What are they—a parcel of kids? Kids shouldn't be dead Charley That's what they musta figured when the dirt started fallin in on em What the hell are they

dom dead? Did they get anything out of it? Did anybody ask them? Did they want to be standin there when the lead poured in? They're just kids or guys with wives and young kids of their own They wanted to be home readin a book or teachin their kid c a t spells cat or takin a woman out into the country in a open car with the wind blowin That's the way it musta come to them when the dirt smacked on their faces dead or no dead

CHARLEY Bury them That's what I say

(There is the chatter of a machine gun off in the night BEVINS is hit He staggers)

BEVINS *(clutching his throat)* Charley—Charley *(His fingers bring down the top sandbag as he falls The machine gun chatter, again and CHARLEY is hit He staggers)*

CHARLEY Oh my God *(The machine gun chatters again He falls over BEVINS There is quiet for a moment Then the eternal artillery again Blackout)*

(A baby spotlight white picks out the FIRST GENERAL standing over the prone forms of the two soldiers He has his fingers to his lips)

FIRST GENERAL *(in a hoarse whisper)* Sssh! Keep it quiet! Nobody must know! Not a word! Sssh! *(Blackout)*

(A spotlight picks out another part of the stage—a newspaper office EDITOR at his desk REPORTER before him hat on head)

REPORTER That's the story! It's as straight as a rifle barrel so help me God

EDITOR (*looking down at manuscript in hand*) This is a freak all right I never came across anything like it in all the years I've been putting out a newspaper

REPORTER There never was anything like it before It's something new Something's happening Somebody's waking up

EDITOR It didn't happen

REPORTER So help me God I got it straight Those guys just stood up in the grave and said The hell with it you can't bury us! God's honest truth

EDITOR (*picks up telephone*) Get me Macready at the War Department It's an awfully funny story

REPORTER What about it? It's the story of the year—the story of the century—the biggest story of all time—men getting up with bullets in their hearts and refusing to be buried

EDITOR Who do they think they are—Jesus Christ?

REPORTER What's the difference? That's the story! You can't miss it! You goin' to put it in? Lissen—are you goin' to put it in?

EDITOR Hold it! (*Into telephone*) Macready!

REPORTER What's he got to do with it?

EDITOR I'll find out What are *you* so hot about? Hello! Macready? Hansen from the New York Yeah Listen, Macready

I got this story about six guys who refuse to be Yeah

REPORTER What does he say?

EDITOR Okay Macready Yeah if that's the way the Government feels about it Yeah

REPORTER Well?

EDITOR (*putting down telephone*) No

REPORTER Holy god damn you got to People got a right to know

EDITOR In time of war people have a right to know nothing If we put it in it'd be censored anyway

REPORTER Ah, this is a lousy business

EDITOR Write another human interest story about the boys at the front That'll keep you busy You know that one about how the boys in the front line sing I Can't Give You Anything but Love before they go over the top

REPORTER But I wrote that last week

EDITOR It made a great hit Write it again

REPORTER But these guys in the grave Boss Lloyds are giving three to one they won't go down That's a story!

EDITOR Save it You can write a book of memoirs twenty years from now Make that I Can't Give You Anything but Love story a thousand words and make it snappy The casualty lists run into two pages

today and we got to balance them with something (Blackout)
(Rumble of guns The spotlight illuminates the grave on the platform where the CORPSES are still standing hip deep facing the rear The burial squad is there and the CAPTAIN and the GENERALS)

CAPTAIN There they are What are the Generals going to do about them?

FIRST GENERAL *(pettishly)* I see them Stop saying What are the Generals going to do about them?

SECOND GENERAL Who do they think they are?

THIRD GENERAL It's against all regulations

FIRST GENERAL Quiet, please quiet Let's not have any scenes

This must be handled with authority—but tactfully I'll talk to them! *(He goes over to brink of grave)* Men! Listen to me! This is a strange situation in which we find ourselves I have no doubt but that it is giving you as much embarrassment as it is us

SECOND GENERAL *(confidentially to THIRD GENERAL)* The wrong note

He's good on artillery but when it comes to using his head he's lost

He's been that way ever since I knew him

FIRST GENERAL We're all anxious to get this thing over with just as quickly and quietly as possible I know that you men are with me on this There's no reason why we can't get together and settle this in jig time I grant my friends that it's unfortunate that you're dead I'm

sure that you'll all listen to reason Listen too to the voice of duty the voice that sent you here to die bravely for your country Gentle men your country demands of you that you lie down and allow yourselves to be buried Must our flag fly at half mast and droop in the wind while you so far forget your duty to the lovely land that bore and nurtured you? I love America gentlemen its hills and valleys If you loved America as I do you would not *(He breaks down over come)* I find it difficult to go on *(He pauses)* I have studied this matter and come to the conclusion that the best thing for all concerned would be for you men to lie down peaceably in your graves and allow yourselves to be buried *(He waits The CORPSES do not move)*

THIRD GENERAL It didn't work He's not firm enough You've got to be firm right from the beginning or you're lost

FIRST GENERAL Men perhaps you don't understand *(To CORPSES)* I advise you to allow yourselves to be buried *(They stand motionless)* You're dead men don't you realize that? You can't be dead and stand there like that Here here

I'll prove it to you! *(He gets out DOCTOR'S reports)* Look! A doctor's reports Witnessed! Witnessed by Privates McGurk and Butler *(He reads the names)* This ought to show you! *(He waves the reports He stands on the brink of the grave, middle rear glaring at the CORPSES He shouts at them)* You're dead, officially all of you! I won't mince words! You heard! We're a civilized race we bury our dead Lie down! *(The CORPSES stand)* Private Dris coll! Private Schelling! Private

Morgan! Private Levy! Private Webster! Private Dean! Lie down! As Commander in Chief of the Army as appointed by the President of the United States in accordance with the Constitution of the United States and as your superior officer I command you to lie down and allow yourselves to be buried (*They stand silent and motionless*) Tell me—What is it going to get you staying above the earth? (*Not a sound from the CORPSES*) I asked you a question men Answer me! What is it going to get you? If I were dead I wouldn't hesitate to be buried Answer me what do you want? What is it going to get you you (*As they remain silent*) Tell me! Answer me! Why don't you talk? Explain it to me, make me understand

SECOND GENERAL (*in whisper to THIRD GENERAL as FIRST GENERAL glares hopelessly at the CORPSES*) He's licked It was a mistake—moving him off the artillery

THIRD GENERAL They ought to let me handle them I'd show 'em You've got to use force

FIRST GENERAL (*bursting out—after walking along entire row of CORPSES and back*) Lie down! (*The CORPSES stand immobile The GENERAL rushes out moaning*) Oh God oh my God (*Blackout*) (*Spotlight red picks out two WHORES dressed in the uniform of their trade on a street corner*)

FIRST WHORE I'd lay 'em all right They oughta call me in I'd lay 'em There wouldn't be any doubt in anybody's mind after I got through with 'em Why don't they call me in instead of those Generals? What do

Generals know about such things? (*Both WHORES go off into fits of wild laughter*) Call the War Department Mabel tell 'em we'll come to their rescue at the prevailing rates (*Laugh wildly again*) We're willing to do our part like the papers say—share the burden! Oh my Gawd I ain't laughed so much (*Laugh again A MAN crosses their path Still laughing but professional*) Say Johnny Johnny what cha doin' tonight? How'd ya like ? (*The MAN passes on The women laugh*) Share the burden—Oh my Gawd (*They laugh and laugh and laugh clinging to each other Blackout But the laughter goes on*) (*The spotlight illuminates the grave—SOLDIERS of burial detail are sitting around a covered fire SECOND SOLDIER is singing Swing Low Sweet Chariot*)

THIRD SOLDIER This is a funny war It's rollin' downhill Everybody's waitin' Personally I think it's those guys there that (*He gestures to grave*)

SERGEANT Nobody asked you You're not supposed to talk about it

FIRST SOLDIER Regulation 2035a

SERGEANT Well I just told ya (*SECOND SOLDIER starts to sing again SERGEANT breaks in on him*) Say listen think about those guys there How do you think they feel with you howlin' like this? They got more important things to think about

SECOND SOLDIER I won't distract 'em I got an easy flowin' voice

SERGEANT They don't like it I can tell

FIRST SOLDIER Well I like to hear him sing And I'll bet they do too I'm gonna ask em (He jumps up)

SERGEANT Now listen! (FIRST SOLDIER slowly approaches the grave He is embarrassed a little frightened)

FIRST SOLDIER Say men I (CAPTAIN comes on FIRST SOLDIER stands at attention)

CAPTAIN Sergeant

SERGEANT Yes Sir!

CAPTAIN You know that none of the men is to talk to them

SERGEANT Yes Sir Only Sir

CAPTAIN All right (To FIRST SOLDIER) Get back there please

FIRST SOLDIER Yes Sir! (He salutes and goes back)

SERGEANT (under his breath to FIRST SOLDIER) I warned ya

FIRST SOLDIER Shut up! I wanna listen to what's goin' on there! (CAPTAIN has meanwhile seated himself on the edge of the grave and has brought out a pair of eyeglasses with which he plays as he talks)

CAPTAIN Gentlemen I have been asked by the Generals to talk to you My work is not this (He indicates his uniform) I am a philosopher a scientist my uniform is a pair of eye glasses my usual weapons test tubes and books At a time

like this perhaps we need philosophy need science First I must say that your General has ordered you to lie down

FIRST CORPSE We used to have a General

THIRD CORPSE No more

FOURTH CORPSE They sold us

CAPTAIN What do you mean—sold you!

FIFTH CORPSE Sold us for twenty five yards of bloody mud

SIXTH CORPSE A life for four yards of bloody mud

CAPTAIN We had to take that hill General's orders You're soldiers You understand

FIRST CORPSE We understand now The real estate operations of Generals are always carried on at boom prices

SIXTH CORPSE A life for four yards of bloody mud Gold is cheaper and rare jewels pearls and rubies

THIRD CORPSE I fell in the first yard

SECOND CORPSE I caught on the wire and hung there while the machine gun stitched me through the middle to it

FOURTH CORPSE I was there at the end and thought I had life in my hands for another day but a shell came and my life dripped into the mud

SIXTH CORPSE Ask the General how he'd like to be dead at twenty (*Calling as though to the GENERALS*) Twenty General twenty

CAPTAIN Other men are dead

FIRST CORPSE Too many

CAPTAIN Men must die for their country's sake—if not you then others This has always been Men died for Pharaoh and Cæsar and Rome two thousand years ago and more and went into the earth with their wounds Why not you ?

FIFTH CORPSE Men, even the men who die for Pharaoh and Cæsar and Rome must in the end before all hope is gone discover that a man can die happy and be contentedly buried only when he dies for himself or for a cause that is his own and not Pharaoh's or Cæsar's or Rome's

CAPTAIN Still—what is this world that you cling to it? A speck of dust a flaw in the skies a thumb print on the margin of a page printed in an incomprehensible language

SECOND CORPSE It is our home

THIRD CORPSE We have been dispossessed by force but we are reclaiming our home It is time that mankind claimed its home—this earth—its home

CAPTAIN We have no home We are strangers in the universe and cling desperate and grimy to the crust of our world and if there is a God and this His earth we must be a terrible sight in His eyes

FOURTH CORPSE We are not disturbed by the notion of our appearance in the eyes of God

CAPTAIN The earth is an unpleasant place and when you are rid of it you are well rid of it Man cheats man here and the only sure things are death and despair Of what use then to remain on it once you have the permission to leave?

FIFTH CORPSE It is the one thing we know

SIXTH CORPSE We did not ask permission to leave Nobody asked us whether we wanted it or not The Generals pushed us out and closed the door on us Who are the Generals that they are to close doors on us?

CAPTAIN The earth I assure you is a mean place insignificantly miserable

FIRST CORPSE We must find out for ourselves That is our right

CAPTAIN Man has no rights

FIRST CORPSE Man can make rights for himself It requires only determination and the good will of ordinary men We have made ourselves the right to walk this earth seeing it and judging it for ourselves

CAPTAIN There is peace in the grave

THIRD CORPSE Peace and the worms and the roots of grass There is a deeper peace than that which comes with feeding the roots of the grass

CAPTAIN (*looks slowly at them in turn*) Yes gentlemen (*Turns*

away and walks off FIRST SOLDIER
moves slowly up to the grave)

FIRST SOLDIER *(to the CORPSES)* I
I'm glad you you didn't
I'm glad Say is there any
thing we can do for you?

SERGEANT Lissen soldier!

FIRST SOLDIER *(passionately harsh
ly)* Shut up Sergeant! *(Then very
softly and warmly to FIRST
CORPSE)* Is there anything we can
do for you Friend?

FIRST CORPSE Yeah You can sing
*(There is a pause in which the
FIRST SOLDIER turns around and
looks at the SECOND SOLDIER then
back to the FIRST CORPSE Then the
silence is broken by the SECOND SOL-
DIER'S voice raised in song It goes
on for a few moments then fades as
the light dims)*
*(Colored spotlights pick out three
BUSINESS MEN on different parts of
the stage)*

FIRST BUSINESS MAN Ssh! Keep it
quiet!

THIRD BUSINESS MAN Sink em with
lead

SECOND BUSINESS MAN Bury them!
Bury them six feet under!

FIRST BUSINESS MAN What are we
going to do?

SECOND BUSINESS MAN We must
keep up the morale

THIRD BUSINESS MAN Lead! Lead!
A lot of lead!

SECOND BUSINESS MAN What do we
pay our Generals for?

CHORUS OF BUSINESS MEN Ssssh!
(Blackout)
*(Spotlight on the congregation of
a church kneeling with a PRIEST
praying over them)*

PRIEST O Jesus our God and our
Christ Who has redeemed us with
Thy blood on the Cross at Calvary
give us Thy blessing on this holy
day and cause it that our soldiers
allow themselves to be buried in
peace and bring victory to our
arms enlisted in Thy Cause and
the cause of all righteousness on the
field of battle Amen
(Blackout)

FIRST GENERAL *(in purple baby
spotlight)* Please God keep it
quiet
(Spotlight on newspaper office)

REPORTER Well? What are you go-
ing to do?

EDITOR Do I have to do anything?

REPORTER God damn right you do
They're still standing up
They're going to stand up from now
till Doomsday They're not going to
be able to bury soldiers any more
It's in the stars You got to
say something about it

EDITOR All right Put this in It is
alleged that certain members of an
infantry regiment refuse to allow
themselves to be buried

REPORTER Well?

EDITOR That's all

REPORTER *(incredulous)* That's all?

EDITOR Yes Christ, isn't that
enough? *(Blackout)*

(Spotlight on a radio loudspeaker
A VOICE *mellow and beautiful*
comes out of it)

THE VOICE It has been reported that certain American soldiers killed on the field of battle have refused to allow themselves to be buried Whether this is true or not the Coast to Coast Broadcasting System feels that this must give the American public an idea of the indomitable spirit of the American dough boy in this war We cannot rest until this war is won—not even our brave dead boys *(Blackout)*
(Guns Spotlight on FIRST GENERAL and CAPTAIN)

FIRST GENERAL Have you any suggestions ?

CAPTAIN I think so Get their women

FIRST GENERAL What good'll their women do?

CAPTAIN Women are always conservative It's a conservative notion—this one of lying down and allowing yourself to be buried when you're dead The women'll fight the General's battle for them—in the best possible way—through their emotions It's the General's best bet

FIRST GENERAL Women—Of course! You've got it there Captain! Get out their women! Get them in a hurry! We'll have these boys underground in a jiffy Women! By God I never thought of it Send out the call Women! *(Fadeout)*
(A baby spotlight on the loudspeaker The VOICE again just as mellow, just as persuasive)

VOICE We have been asked by the War Department to broadcast an appeal to the women of Privates Driscoll Schelling Morgan Webster Levy and Dean reported dead The War Department requests that the women of these men present themselves at the War Department Office immediately It is within their power to do a great service to their country
(Blackout)
(The spotlight illuminates the FIRST GENERAL where he stands addressing six women)

FIRST GENERAL Go to your men talk to them make them see the error of their ways ladies You women represent what is dearest in our civilization—the sacred foundations of the home We are fighting this war to protect the foundations of the homes of America! Those foundations will crumble utterly if these men of yours come back from the dead I shudder to think of the consequences of such an act Our entire system will be mortally struck Our banks will close our buildings collapse our army will desert the field and leave our fair land open to be overrun by the enemy Ladies you are all Gold Star mothers and wives and sweethearts You want to win this war I know it I know the high fire of patriotism that burns in women's breasts That is why I have called upon you Ladies let me make this clear to you If you do not get your men to lie down and allow themselves to be buried I fear that our cause is lost The burden of the war is upon your shoulders now Wars are not fought with guns and powder alone ladies Here is your chance to do your part, a glorious part You are fighting for your homes

your children your sisters lives
your country's honor You are fight-
ing for religion for love for all de-
cent human life Wars can be fought
and won only when the dead are
buried and forgotten How can we
forget the dead who refuse to be
buried? And we *must* forget them!
There is no room in this world for
dead men They will lead only to
the bitterest unhappiness—for you
for them for everybody Go ladies
do your duty Your country waits
upon you (Blackout)

(Spotlight immediately illuminates
the place where PRIVATE SCHELL-
ING CORPSE TWO is talking to his
wife MRS SCHELLING is a spare
taciturn woman a farmer's wife
who might be twenty or forty or
anything in between)

BESS SCHELLING Did it hurt much
John?

SCHELLING How's the kid Bess?

BESS He's fine He talks now He
weighs twenty eight pounds He'll
be a big boy Did it hurt much
John?

SCHELLING How is the farm? Is it
going all right Bess?

BESS It's going The rye was heavy
this year Did it hurt much John?

SCHELLING Who did the reaping for
you Bess?

BESS Schmidt took care of it—and
his boys Schmidts too old for the
war and his boys are too young
Took em nearly two weeks The
wheat's not bad this year Schmidt's
oldest boy expects to be called in a
month or two He practises behind
the barn with that old shotgun
Schmidt uses for duck

SCHELLING The Schmidts were al-
ways fools When the kid grows up
Bess you make sure you pump some
sense into his head What color's his
hair?

BESS Blond Like you What
are you going to do John?

SCHELLING I would like to see the
kid—and the farm—and

BESS They say you're dead John

SCHELLING I'm dead all right

BESS Then how is it ?

SCHELLING I don't know Maybe
there's too many of us under the
ground now Maybe the earth can't
stand it no more You got to change
crops sometime What are you do-
ing here Bess?

BESS They asked me to get you to
let yourself be buried

SCHELLING What do you think?

BESS You're dead John

SCHELLING Well ?

BESS What's the good ?

SCHELLING I don't know Only
there's something in me dead or no
dead that won't let me be buried

BESS You were a queer man John
I never did understand what you
were about But what's the good
?

SCHELLING Bess I never talked so
that I could get you to understand
what I wanted while I—while I—

before Maybe now There s
a couple of things Bess that I ain t
had enough of Easy things the
things you see when you look outa
your window at night after supper
or when you wake up in the mornin
Things you smell when you step
outside the door when summer s on
and the sun starts to turn the grass
brown Things you hear when
you re busy with the horses or
pitchin the hay and you don t really
notice them and yet they come back
to you Things like the fuzz of green
over a field in spring where you
planted wheat and it s started to
come out overnight Things like
lookin at rows of corn scrapin in
the breeze tall and green with the
silk flyin off the ears in the wind
Things like seein the sweat come
out all over on your horse s fat flank
and seem it shine like silk in front
of you smellin horsey and strong
Things like seem the loam turn
back all fat and deep brown on both
sides as the plough turns it over so
that it gets to be awful hard walkin
behind it Things like taking a cold
drink of water outa the well after
you ve boiled in the sun all after
noon and feelin the water go down
and down into you coolin you off
all through from the inside out
Things like seem a blond kid all
busy and serious playin with a dog
on the shady side of a house
There ain t nothin like that down
here, Bess

BESS Everything has its place John
Dead men have theirs

SCHELLING My place is on the
earth Bess My business is with the
top of the earth not the under side
It was a trap that yanked me down
I m not smart Bess, and I m easy
trapped—but I can tell now

I got some stories to tell farmers
before I m through—I m going to
tell em

BESS We could bury you home
John near the creek—it s cool there
and quiet and there s always a
breeze in the trees

SCHELLING Later Bess when I ve
had my fill of lookin and smellin
and talkin A man should be
able to walk into his grave not be
dragged into it

BESS How ll I feel—and the kid—
with you walkin around—like—
like that ?

SCHELLING I won t bother you
I won t come near you

BESS Even so Just knowin

SCHELLING I can t help it This is
somethin bigger n you—bigger n
me It s somethin I ain t had nothin
to do with startin It s some
thin that just grew up outa the
earth—like—like a weed—a flower
Cut it down now and it ll jump up
in a dozen new places You can t
stop it The earth s ready for it

BESS You were a good husband,
John For the kid—and me—won t
you?

SCHELLING (*quietly*) Go home
Bess Go home! (*Blackout*)
(*The spotlight picks out CORPSE*
NUMBER FIVE PRIVATE LEVY *where*
he stands in the grave, with his back
to the audience His woman a pert
attractive young lady, is sitting next
to him above him facing him talk
ing to him)

JOAN You loved me best didn't you Henry—of all of them—all those women—you loved me the best didn't you?

LEVY (FIFTH CORPSE) What's the difference now?

JOAN I want to know it

LEVY It's not important

JOAN It's important to me I knew about the others about Doris and that shifty eyed Janet Henry you're not a live man are you Henry?

LEVY No I'm all shot away inside

JOAN Must wars always be fought in the mud like this? I never expected it to look like this It looks like a dump heap

LEVY You've gotten your shoes muddy They're pretty shoes Joan

JOAN Do you think so Henry? They're lizard I like them too It's so hard to get a good pair of shoes nowadays

LEVY Do you still dance Joan?

JOAN Oh I'm really much better than I used to be There are so many dances back home nowadays Dances for orphan relief and convalescent hospitals and Victory Loans I'm busy seven nights a week I sold more Victory Loans than any other girl in the League I got a helmet one of *their* helmets one with a bullet hole in it for selling eleven thousand dollars worth

LEVY Out here we get them for nothing by the million—bullet holes and all

JOAN That sounds bitter You shouldn't sound bitter

LEVY I'm sorry

JOAN I heard Colonel Elwell the other day You know Colonel Elwell old Anthony Elwell who owns the mill He made a speech at the monthly Red Cross banquet and he said that that was the nice thing about this war it wasn't being fought bitterly by our boys He said it was just patriotism that kept us going He's a wonderful speaker Colonel Elwell I cried and cried

LEVY I remember him

JOAN Henry do you think we're going to win the war?

LEVY What's the difference?

JOAN Henry! What a way to talk! I don't know what's come over you Really I don't Why the papers say that if *they* win the war they'll burn our churches and tear down our museums and and rape our women (LEVY *laughs*) Why are you laughing Henry?

LEVY I'm dead Joan

JOAN Yes Then why—why don't you let them bury you?

LEVY There are a lot of reasons There were a lot of things I loved on this earth

JOAN A dead man can't touch a woman

LEVY The women yes—but more than touching them I got a great joy just from listening to women hearing them laugh watching their skirts blow in the wind noticing the way their breasts bounced up and down inside their dresses when they walked It had nothing to do with touching them I liked to hear the sound of their high heels on pavements at night and the tenderness in their voices when they walked past me arm in arm with a young man You were so lovely Joan with your pale hair and long hands

JOAN You always liked my hair (*A pause*) No woman will walk arm in arm with you Henry Levy while you cheat the grave

LEVY No But there will be the eyes of women to look at and the bright color of their hair and the soft way they swing their hips when they walk before young men These are the things that mean life and the earth to me the joy and the pain These are the things the earth still owes me now when I am only thirty Joy and pain—to each man in his own way a full seventy years to be ended by an unhurried fate not by a colored pin on a General's map What do I care for the colored pins on a General's map?

JOAN They are not only pins They mean more

LEVY More? To whom? To the Generals—not to me To me they are colored pins It is not a fair bargain—this exchange of my life for a small part of a colored pin

JOAN Henry how can you talk like that? You know why this war is being fought

LEVY No Do you?

JOAN Of course everybody knows We *must* win! We must be prepared to sacrifice our last drop of blood Anyway what can you do?

LEVY Do you remember last summer Joan? My last leave We went to Maine I would like to remember that—the sun and the beach and your soft hands—for a long time

JOAN What are you going to do?

LEVY Walk the world looking at the fine long legged girls seeing in them something deep and true and passionately vital listening to the sound of their light voices with ears the Generals would have stopped with the graves solid mud

JOAN Henry! Henry! Once you said you loved me For love of me Henry go into the grave

LEVY Poor Joan (*Stretches out his hand tenderly as if to touch her*)

JOAN (*recoiling*) Don't touch me (*Pause*) For love of me

LEVY Go home Joan! *Go home!* (*Blackout*)
(*The spotlight picks out the THIRD CORPSE PRIVATE MORGAN and JULIA BLAKE he with his back to the audience standing in the grave she above and to the right JULIA sobs*)

MORGAN Stop crying Julia What's the sense in crying?

JULIA No sense Only I can't stop crying

MORGAN You shouldn't have come

JULIA They asked me to come
They said you wouldn't let them
bury you—dead and all

MORGAN Yes

JULIA (*crying*) Why don't they
kill me too? I'd let them bury me
I'd be glad to be buried—to get
away from all this I—I haven't
stopped crying for two weeks now
I used to think I was tough I never
cried Even when I was a kid It's
a wonder where all the tears can
come from Though I guess there's
always room for more tears I
thought I was all cried out when I
heard about the way they killed
Fred My kid brother I used to
comb his hair in the morning when
he went to school I—I
Then they killed you They did,
didn't they?

MORGAN Yes

JULIA It's hard to know like this I
—I know though It—it makes it
harder this way with you like this
I could forget easier if you
But I wasn't going to say that I was
going to listen to you Oh my dar-
ling it's been so rotten I get drunk
I hate it and I get drunk I sing out
loud and everybody laughs I was
going through your things the other
day—I'm crazy I go through
all your things three times a week,
touching your clothes and reading
your books You have the
nicest clothes There was that
quatrain you wrote to me that time
you were in Boston and First I
laughed then I cried then It's
a lovely poem—you would have
been a fine writer I think you would
have been the greatest writer that
ever I Did they shoot your
hands away darling?

MORGAN No

JULIA That's good I couldn't bear
it if anything happened to your
hands Was it bad darling?

MORGAN Bad enough

JULIA But they didn't shoot your
hands away That's something You
learn how to be grateful for the
craziest things nowadays People
have to be grateful for something
and it's so hard with the war and
all Oh darling I never could
think of you dead Somehow you
didn't seem to be made to be dead
I would feel better if you were
buried in a fine green field and there
were funny little flowers jumping
up around the stone that said "Wal-
ter Morgan Born 1913 Died 1937"
I could stop getting drunk at night
and singing out loud so that people
laugh at me The worst thing is
looking at all the books you piled up
home that you didn't read They
wait there waiting for your hands
to come and open them and Oh
let them bury you, let them bury
you There's nothing left only
crazy people and clothes that'll
never be used hanging in the closets
Why not?

MORGAN There are too many books
I haven't read too many places I
haven't seen too many memories I
haven't kept long enough I
won't be cheated of them

JULIA And me? Darling me I
hate getting drunk Your name
would look so well on a nice simple
chunk of marble in a green field
"Walter Morgan, Beloved of Julia
Blake With poppies and
daisies and those little purple flow-
ers all around the bottom, and

(She is bent over almost wailing There is the flash of a gun in her hand and she totters falls) Now they can put my name on the casualty lists too What do they call those purple flowers darling ? *(Blackout)*

(The spotlight follows KATHERINE DRISCOLL as she makes her way from CORPSE to CORPSE in the grave looking at their faces She looks first at CORPSE SIX shudders covers her eyes and moves on She stops at CORPSE FIVE)

KATHERINE I'm Katherine Driscoll I—I'm looking for my brother He's dead Are you my brother?

FIFTH CORPSE No

(KATHERINE goes on to CORPSE FOUR stops looks moves on to CORPSE THREE)

KATHERINE I'm looking for my brother My name is Katherine Driscoll His name—

THIRD CORPSE No

(KATHERINE goes on stands irresolutely before CORPSE TWO)

KATHERINE Are you ? *(Realizing it isn't her brother Goes on to CORPSE ONE, I'm looking for my brother My name is Katherine Driscoll His name—*

DRISCOLL I'm Tom Driscoll

KATHERINE Hel—Hello I don't know you After fifteen years—And

DRISCOLL What do you want Katherine?

KATHERINE You don't know me either do you?

DRISCOLL No

KATHERINE It's funny—my coming here to talk to a dead man—to try to get him to do something because once long ago he was my brother They talked me into it I don't know how to begin

DRISCOLL You'll be wasting your words Katherine

KATHERINE They should have asked someone nearer to you—someone who loved you—only they couldn't find anybody I was the nearest they said

DRISCOLL That's so You were the nearest

KATHERINE And I fifteen years away Poor Tom It couldn't have been a sweet life you led these fifteen years

DRISCOLL It wasn't

KATHERINE You were poor too?

DRISCOLL Sometimes I begged for meals I wasn't lucky

KATHERINE And yet you want to go back Is there no more sense in the dead Tom than in the living?

DRISCOLL Maybe not Maybe there's no sense in either living or dying but we can't believe that I travelled to a lot of places and I saw a lot of things always from the black side of them always working hard to keep from starving and turning my collar up to keep the wind out and they were mean and rotten and sad but always I saw that they could be better and some day they were going to be better

and that the guys like me who knew that they were rotten and knew that they could be better had to get out and fight to make it that way

KATHERINE You're dead Your fights over

DRISCOLL The fights never over I got things to say to people now—to the people who nurse big machines and the people who swing shovels and the people whose babies die with big bellies and rotten bones I got things to say to the people who leave their lives behind them and pick up guns to fight in somebody else's war Important things Big things Big enough to lift me out of the grave right back onto the earth into the middle of men just because I got the voice to say them If God could lift Jesus

KATHERINE Tom! Have you lost religion too?

DRISCOLL I got another religion I got a religion that wants to take heaven out of the clouds and plant it right here on the earth where most of us can get a slice of it It isn't as pretty a heaven—there aren't any streets of gold and there aren't any angels, and we'd have to worry about sewerage and railroad schedules in it and we don't guarantee everybody'd love it but it'd be right here stuck in the mud of this earth and there wouldn't be any entrance requirement, like dying to get into it Dead or alive I see that and it won't let me rest I was the first one to get up in this black grave of ours because that idea wouldn't let me rest I pulled the others with me—that's my job pulling the others They only know what they want—I know how they can get it

KATHERINE There's still the edge of arrogance on you

DRISCOLL I got heaven in my two hands to give to men There's reason for arrogance

KATHERINE I came to ask you to lie down and let them bury you It seems foolish now But

DRISCOLL It's foolish Katherine I didn't get up from the dead to go back to the dead I'm going to the living now

KATHERINE Fifteen years It's a good thing your mother isn't alive How can you say good bye to a dead brother Tom?

DRISCOLL Wish him an easy grave Katherine

KATHERINE A green and pleasant grave to you Tom when finally finally green and pleasant (*Blackout*)
(*The spotlight illuminates PRIVATE DEAN the SIXTH CORPSE where he stands with his back to the audience listening to his mother a thin shabby red eyed woman of about forty five sitting above and to the right in the full glare of the spotlight DEAN is in shadow*)

MRS DEAN Let me see your face son

DEAN You don't want to see it, mom

MRS DEAN My baby's face Once before you

DEAN You don't want to see it mom I know Didn't they tell you what happened to me?

MRS DEAN I asked the doctor He said a piece of shell hit the side of your head—but even so

DEAN Don't ask to see it mom

MRS DEAN How are you son?
(DEAN *laughs a little—bitterly*) Oh I forgot I asked you that question so many times while you were growing up Jimmy Let me see your face Jimmy—just once

DEAN How did Alice take it when she heard ?

MRS DEAN She put a gold star in her window She tells everybody you were going to be married Is that so?

DEAN Maybe I liked Alice

MRS DEAN She came over on your birthday That was before this—this happened She brought flowers Big chrysanthemums Yellow A lot of them We had to put them in two vases I baked a cake I don't know why It's hard to get eggs and fine flour nowadays My baby twenty years old Let me see your face Jimmy boy

DEAN Go home mom It's not doing you any good staying here

MRS DEAN I want you to let them bury you Baby It's done now and over It would be better for you that way

DEAN There's no better to it mom—and no worse It happened that way that's all

MRS DEAN Let me see your face Jimmy You had such a fine face Like a good baby's It hurt me when

you started to shave Somehow I almost forget what you looked like Baby I remember what you looked like when you were five when you were ten—you were chubby and fair and your cheeks felt like little silk cushions when I put my hand on them But I don't remember how you looked when you went away with that uniform on you and that helmet over your face Baby let me see your face once

DEAN Don't ask me You don't want to see You'll feel worse—for ever if you see

MRS DEAN I'm not afraid I can look at my baby's face Do you think mothers can be frightened by their children's

DEAN No mom

MRS DEAN Baby listen to me I'm your mother Let them bury you There's something peaceful and done about a grave After a while you forget the death and you remember only the life before it But this way—you never forget it's a wound walking around forever without peace For your sake and mine and your father's Baby

DEAN I was only twenty, mom I hadn't done anything I hadn't seen anything I never even had a girl I spent twenty years practising to be a man and then they killed me Being a kid's no good mom You try to get over it as soon as you can You don't really live while you're a kid You mark time waiting I waited, mom—but then I got cheated They made a speech and played a trumpet and dressed me in a uniform and then they killed me

MRS DEAN Oh Baby Baby there's no peace this way Please let them

DEAN No mom

MRS DEAN Then once now so that I can remember—let me see your face my baby's face

DEAN Mom the shell hit close to me You don't want to look at a man when a shell hits close to him

MRS DEAN Let me see your face Jimmy

DEAN All right mom Look! *(He turns his face to her The audience can't see his face but immediately a spotlight white and sharp shoots down from directly above and hits DEAN'S head MRS DEAN leans forward staring Another spotlight shoots down immediately after from the extreme right then one from the left then two more from above They hit with the impact of blows and MRS DEAN shudders a little as they come as though she were watching her son being beaten There is absolute silence for a moment Then MRS DEAN starts to moan, low painfully The lights remain fixed and MRS DEAN'S moans rise to a wail then to a scream She leans back covering her eyes with her hands screaming Blackout The scream persists fading like a siren fading in the distance until it is finally stilled)*

(The spotlight on CORPSE THREE PRIVATE WEBSTER and his wife a dumpy sad little woman)

MARTHA WEBSTER Say something

WEBSTER What do you want me to say?

MARTHA Something—anything Only talk You give me the shivers standing there like that—looking like that

WEBSTER Even now—after this—there's nothing that we can talk to each other about

MARTHA Don't talk like that You talked like that enough when you were alive— It's not my fault that you're dead

WEBSTER No

MARTHA It was bad enough when you were alive—and you didn't talk to me and you looked at me as though I was always in your way

WEBSTER Martha Martha what's the difference now?

MARTHA I just wanted to let you know Now I suppose you're going to come back and sit around and ruin my life altogether?

WEBSTER No I'm not going to come back

MARTHA Then what ?

WEBSTER I couldn't explain it to you Martha

MARTHA No! Oh, no—you couldn't explain it to your wife But you could explain it to that dirty bunch of loafers down at that damned garage of yours and you could explain it to those bums in the saloon on F Street

WEBSTER I guess I could *(Musing)* Things seemed to be clearer when I was talking to the boys while I worked over a job And I managed

to talk so people could get to under stand what I meant down at the saloon on F Street It was nice standing there of a Saturday night with a beer in front of you and a man or two that understood your own language next to you talking —oh about Babe Ruth or the new oiling system Ford was putting out or the chances of us gettin into the war

MARTHA Its different if you were rich and had a fine beautiful life you wanted to go back to Then I could understand But you were poor you always had dirt under your finger nails you never ate enough you hated me your wife you couldn't stand being in the same room with me Don't shake your head I know Out of your whole life all you could remember that's good is a beer on Saturday night that you drank in company with a couple of bums

WEBSTER That's enough I didn't think about it then but I guess I was happy those times

MARTHA You were happy those times but you weren't happy in your own home! I know even if you don't say it! Well I wasn't happy either! Living in three damned rooms that the sun didn't hit five times a year! Watching the roaches make picnics on the walls! Happy!

WEBSTER I did my best

MARTHA Eighteen fifty a week! Your best! Eighteen fifty condensed milk a two dollar pair of shoes once a year five hundred dollars insurance chopped meat God, how I hate chopped meat!

Eighteen fifty being afraid of every thing—of the landlord the gas company scared stiff every month that I was goin to have a baby! Why shouldn't I have a baby? Who says I shouldn't have a baby? Eighteen fifty no baby!

WEBSTER I woulda liked a kid

MARTHA Would you? You never said anything

WEBSTER Its good to have a kid A kid's somebody to talk to

MARTHA At first In the beginning I thought we'd have a kid some day

WEBSTER Yeah me too I used to go out on Sundays and watch men wheel their kids through the park

MARTHA There were so many things you didn't tell me Why did you keep quiet?

WEBSTER I was ashamed to talk to you I couldn't give you anything

MARTHA I'm sorry

WEBSTER In the beginning it looked so fine I used to smile to myself when I walked beside you in the street and other men looked at you

MARTHA That was a long time ago

WEBSTER A kid would've helped

MARTHA No it wouldn't Don't fool yourself Webster The Clarks down stairs have four and it doesn't help them Old man Clark comes home drunk every Saturday night and beats em with his shaving strap and throws plates at the old lady Kids

don't help the poor Nothing helps the poor! I'm too smart to have sick dirty kids on eighteen fifty

WEBSTER That's it

MARTHA A house should have a baby But it should be a clean house with a full icebox Why shouldn't I have a baby? Other people have babies Even now with the war other people have babies They don't have to feel their skin curl every time they tear a page off the calendar They go off to beautiful hospitals in lovely ambulances and have babies between colored sheets! What's there about them that God likes that He makes it so easy for *them* to have babies?

WEBSTER They're not married to mechanics

MARTHA No! It's not eighteen fifty for them And now now it's worse Your twenty dollars a month You hire yourself out to be killed and I get twenty dollars a month I wait on line all day to get a loaf of bread I've forgotten what butter tastes like I wait on line with the rain soaking through my shoes for a pound of rotten meat once a week At night I go home Nobody to talk to just sitting watching the bugs with one little light because the Government's got to save electricity You had to go off and leave me to that! What's the war to me that I have to sit at night with nobody to talk to? What's the war to you that you had to go off and ?

WEBSTER That's why I'm standing up now Martha

MARTHA What took you so long then? Why now? Why not a month

ago a year ago ten years ago? Why didn't you stand up then? Why wait until you're dead? You live on eighteen fifty a week with the roaches not saying a word and then when they kill you you stand up! You fool!

WEBSTER I didn't see it before

MARTHA Just like you! Wait until it's too late! There's plenty for live men to stand up for! All right stand up! It's about time you talked back It's about time all you poor miserable eighteen fifty bastards stood up for themselves and their wives and the children they can't have Tell em *all* to stand up! Tell em! Tell em! (*She shrieks Blackout*) (*A spotlight picks out the FIRST GENERAL He has his hands to his lips*)

FIRST GENERAL It didn't work But keep it quiet For God's sake keep it quiet (*Blackout*) (*A spotlight picks out the newspaper office the REPORTER and the EDITOR*)

REPORTER (*in harsh triumph*) It didn't work! Now you've got to put it in! I knew it wouldn't work! Smear it over the headlines! It didn't work!

EDITOR Put it in the headlines They won't be buried! (*Blackout—Voices call*)

VOICE (*NEWSBOY spotted*) It didn't work! Extra! It didn't work!

VOICE (*in dark Hoarse whisper*) It didn't work! They're still standing Somebody do something

VOICE (*spotted a clubwoman type*)
Somebody do something

JULIA BLAKE My lover
(*Blackout*)

VOICE (*NEWSBOY spotted*) Extra!
They're still standing

VOICE (*in dark*) Bury them! They
stink!
(*The next set of characters walks
through a stationary spotlight*)

VOICE (*CLUBWOMAN*) Don't let
them back into the country

VOICE (*a FARMER*) Plant a new
crop! The old crop has worn out
the earth Plant something besides
lives in the old and weary earth

REPORTER (*spotted Triumphantly*)
They're standing From now on
they'll always stand! You can't bury
soldiers any more (*Spotted
a group owners of the next four
voices*)

VOICE (*a NEWSBOY running*) Ex-
tra! It didn't work!

VOICE They stink Bury them!

VOICE (*a BANKER Frantic*) Some-
body do something! Dupont's
passed a dividend!

VOICE What are we going to do
about them?

VOICE (*a PRIEST*) The Day of Judg-
ment is at hand

VOICE What'll happen to our war?
We can't let anything happen to our
war

VOICE (*the FIRST WHORE*) Where
is Christ? (*Blackout*)

VOICE (*A PRIEST facing the three
men*) Pray! Pray! God must help
us! Down on your knees all of you
and pray with your hearts and your
guts and the marrow of your bones

VOICE (*in dark*) File 'em away in
alphabetical order
(*Spotlight on a man in academic
robes reading aloud from behind a
table after he adjusts his glasses*)

VOICE (*REPORTER spotted facing
them all*) It will take more than
prayers What are prayers to a dead
man? They're standing! Mankind
is standing up and climbing out of
its grave (*Blackout*)

VOICE We don't believe it It is
against the dictates of science
(*Blackout—Spot on SECOND GEN-
ERAL*)

VOICE (*in dark*) Have you heard
? It didn't work

SECOND GENERAL Keep it quiet!
(*MRS SCHELLING walks in front of
him The others follow*)

VOICE (*in dark*) Extra! Extra! It
didn't work! They're still standing!
(*Spotted, MRS DEAN MRS SCHEL-
LING JULIA BLAKE*)

BESS SCHELLING My husband

MRS DEAN My baby

JULIA BLAKE My lover

MRS SCHELLING My husband

MRS DEAN My baby (*Black-
out*)

VOICE (*a child*) What have they done with my father?
(*Spot on BANKER at telephone*)

BANKER (*into phone*) Somebody do something Call up the War Department! Call up Congress! Call up the Roman Catholic Church! Somebody do something!

VOICE We've got to put them down!

REPORTER (*spotted*) Never! Never! Never! You can't put them down Put one down and ten will spring up like weeds in an old garden
(*Spots at various parts of the stage*) *

VOICE (*the THIRD GENERAL*) Use lead on them lead! Lead put 'em down once lead'll do it again! Lead!

VOICE Put down the sword and hang the armor on the wall to rust with the years The killed have arisen

VOICE Bury them! Bury the dead!

VOICE The old demons have come back to possess the earth We are lost

VOICE The dead have arisen now let the living rise singing

VOICE Do something for the love of God, do something

VOICE Extra! They're still standing

VOICE Do something!

VOICE (*in dark*) We will do something

VOICE Who are you?

VOICE (*PRIEST in spot*) We are the Church and the voice of God The State has tried its ways now let the Church use the ways of God These corpses are possessed by the devil who plagues the lives of men The Church will exorcise the devil from these men according to its ancient rite and they will lie down in their graves like children to a pleasant sleep rising no more to trouble the world of living men The Church which is the Voice of God upon this earth amen (*Blackout*)

CHORUS OF VOICES Alleluia alleluia sing (*The scream of the bereft mother fades in reaches its height then dies off as the holy procession of priests moves solemnly on with bell book and candle A PRIEST sprinkles the CORPSES with holy water makes the sign of the cross over them and begins in the solemn Latin of the service At the end he goes into English—his voice rising in ritualistic passion*)

PRIEST I exorcise thee unclean spirit in the name of Jesus Christ tremble O Satan thou enemy of the faith thou foe of mankind who hast brought death in to the world who hast deprived men of life and hast rebelled against justice thou seducer of mankind thou root of evil thou source of avarice discord and envy
(*Silence Then the CORPSES begin to laugh lightly horribly There is a sign from the living men present, and the priestly procession goes off, its bell tinkling The laughter goes on Blackout The VOICES call again*)

VOICE No

VOICE NO!

VOICE It didn't work

VOICE We are deserted by God for our evil ways It is the new flood, without rain

NEWSBOY They're licked

VOICE This isn't 1918! This is today!

VOICE See what happens tomorrow!

VOICE Anything can happen now! Anything!

VOICE They're coming We must stop them!

VOICE We must find ways find means!

VOICE (*the REPORTER exulting*) They're coming! There will be no ways no means!

SEMI CHORUS (*mocking*) What are you going to do?

CHORUS *What are you going to do? (They laugh sardonically)*

THIRD GENERAL Let me have a machine gun! Sergeant! A machine gun!

(*A bolt of light comes down to a machine gun set to the left of the grave midway between the edge of the grave and the wings The GENERALS are clustered around it*)

THIRD GENERAL I'll show them! This is what they've needed!

FIRST GENERAL All right all right Get it over with! Hurry! But keep it quiet!

THIRD GENERAL I want a crew to man this gun (*Pointing to FIRST SOLDIER*) You! Come over here! And you! You know what to do I'll give the command to fire

FIRST SOLDIER Not to me you won't. This is over me I won't touch that gun None of us will! We didn't hire out to be no butcher of dead men Do your own chopping

THIRD GENERAL You'll be court-martialed! You'll be dead by tomorrow morning

FIRST SOLDIER Be careful General! I may take a notion to come up like these guys That's the smartest thing I've seen in this army I like it (*To DRISCOLL*) What d'ye say Buddy?

DRISCOLL It's about time (*The THIRD GENERAL draws his gun but the other GENERALS hold his arm*)

FIRST GENERAL Stop it! It's bad enough as it is! Let him alone! Do it yourself! Go ahead do it!

THIRD GENERAL (*whispers*) Oh my God (*He looks down at gun then slowly gets down on one knee behind it The other GENERALS slide out behind him The CORPSES come together in the middle of the grave all facing the gun THIRD GENERAL fumbles with the gun VOICES call*)

REPORTER Never never never!

JULIA Walter Morgan Beloved of Julia Blake Born 1913 Died 1937

MRS DEAN Let me see your face Baby?

MARTHA WEBSTER All you remember is a glass of beer with a couple of bums on Saturday night

KATHERINE DRISCOLL A green and pleasant grave

BESS SCHELLING Did it hurt much John? His hair is blond and he weighs twenty eight pounds

JCAN You loved me best didn't you Henry? best

VOICE Four yards of bloody mud

VOICE I understand how they feel Charlie I wouldn't like to be underground now

REPORTER Never never!

VOICE Never!

MARTHA WEBSTER Tell em all to stand up! Tell em! Tell em!
(The CORPSES begin to walk toward the left end of the grave not marching but walking together silently The THIRD GENERAL stiffens then starts to laugh hysterically As the CORPSES reach the edge of the grave and take their first step out he starts

firing laughing wildly the gun shaking his shoulders violently Calmly in the face of the chattering gun the CORPSES gather on the brink of the grave then walk soberly in a little bunch toward the THIRD GENERAL For a moment they obscure him as they pass him In that moment the gun stops There is absolute silence The CORPSES pass on going off the stage like men who have leisurely business that must be attended to in the not too pressing future As they pass the gun they reveal the THIRD GENERAL slumped forward still over the still gun There is no movement on the stage for a fraction of a second Then slowly the FOUR SOLDIERS of the burial detail break ranks Slowly they walk exactly as the CORPSES have walked off to ward the left past the THIRD GENERAL The last SOLDIER as he passes the THIRD GENERAL deliberately but without malice flicks a cigarette butt at him then follows the other SOLDIERS off the stage The THIRD GENERAL is the last thing we see huddled over his quiet gun pointed at the empty grave as the light dims—in the silence)

CURTAIN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ANATOLE FRANCE

(1844–1924)

Anatole France (Jacques Anatole Thibault) was born in Paris. As a boy he read prodigiously in his father's bookshop on the Quai Voltaire. He began his career in the Library of the French Senate, his first literary success came with the publication of *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* in 1881. In 1896 he was elected to the French Academy. Such works as *Penguin Island*, *The Revolt of the Angels*, *Thais*, and *The Red Lily* made him one of France's immortals. Anatole France's writings no longer enjoy the vogue in America that they once did, but several of his books are still required reading in contemporary literature classes. When he wrote *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife* France was over sixty. Originally it was intended merely to amuse a meeting of a French literary society. Granville Barker's company introduced it to American audiences. It has been popular with amateur groups ever since.

AUGUST STRINDBERG

(1849–1912)

August Strindberg, Swedish dramatist and novelist, was a native of Stockholm. His parents were desperately poor, his early struggles to educate and preserve himself undoubtedly contributed to the pessimism and bitterness of his writings. He became a misogynist and a devout disciple of Nietzsche. His books reflect a profound hatred of women—but he married three times. His best known plays were *The Father*, *Miss Julie*, and *The Creditors*. Contemporaries claimed that Strindberg was insane the last twenty years of his life.

OSCAR WILDE

(1856-1900)

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and Magdalen College, Oxford. While at Oxford his unusual behavior and mode of attitude became the pattern for an aesthetic cult that enjoyed a violent if short-lived, vogue, which was caricatured so tellingly in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*. Wilde was a versatile genius. His poems, his fairy tales, his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, were in themselves enough to win him fame, and the wit and repartee in his plays *Lady Windemere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* still burn brightly enough to ensure frequent revivals to this very day. Wilde's private life was the scandal of London, and in 1895, after a celebrated trial, he was committed to prison for two years. The experience wrecked his life, but also inspired *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* and *De Profundis*. *Salome*, Wilde's only serious play, was written in 1893, and so profoundly did it shock English authorities that the ban on its performance in public was not lifted until 1931.

LADY GREGORY

(Isabella Augusta Persee)

(1859-1932)

Lady Gregory was born in County Galway, Ireland. Devoted from her youth to the stage, she was one of the moving spirits behind the establishment of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, and it was largely due to her efforts that the Irish Players became one of the most famous acting groups in the world. Her good friend and sponsor was William Butler Yeats. He encouraged her to study the old history and folklore of Ireland, she in turn took his dictation and prepared his manuscripts. Together, they made a lasting contribution to Irish literature.

Of her thirty-one plays, *Spreading the News* and *The Rising of the Moon* are easily the best known

ANTON CHEKHOV

(1860–1904)

Anton Chekhov, one of the literary giants of all time, is equally famous for his superb short stories, and a series of immortal plays that include *The Cherry Orchard*, *Three Sisters*, *The Sea Gull*, and *Uncle Vanya*. He was born in Taganrog, near the Crimea. He completed his course in a medical school in Moscow in 1884, served his internship at a local hospital, and played a prominent part in putting down a cholera epidemic eight years later. His first literary efforts were comic short stories, but he soon graduated to writing in a more serious vein. His first play was in one act, written in 1885 and called *On the Highroad*. His important plays were produced by the Moscow Art Theatre, and were soon translated into many languages. They are revived frequently in America. Katharine Cornell's production of *Three Sisters* was a landmark of the 1942–43 theatrical season in New York. Chekhov suffered from tuberculosis in his later years, it was the cause of his death at Badenweiler, in the Black Forest, in 1904.

The Boor and *The Proposal* are Chekhov's best-known one-act comedies.

JAMES M. BARRIE

(1860–1937)

Sir James Matthew Barrie, novelist and playwright, was born in the little village of Kirriemuir, Scotland, which he afterward made famous under the name of Thrums. He graduated from Edinburgh University, and came to London, where he won fame with his novels, *Sentimental Tommy* and *Tommy and Grizel*. His plays delighted England and America. *Peter Pan*, *The Little Minister*, *What Every Woman Knows*, *Dear Brutus*. John Drinkwater

says "They broke every law held sacred by the critics, but the spectators laughed and shook or in turn were touched to tears. The wizard had waved his wand and they were mesmerized." *The Twelve-Pound Look* has been for many years a standby in the repertory of Ethel Barrymore, and, with *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, is to Americans probably the most familiar of his short plays.

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

(1862-1931)

Arthur Schnitzler was born, lived, and died in his beloved Vienna, mercifully missing by a few years the dire fate that was to befall it. He was a brilliant medical student in his youth, but from the time he was thirty-three, he devoted himself exclusively to literature and the drama. His best-known plays are *Anatol*, *The Green Cockatoo*, and *Reigen*. Three of his most beautiful and melancholy novels were written in his declining years: *Fraulein Else* (1924), *Rhapsody* (1925), *Flight into Darkness* (1926). A shadow was already creeping over Austria, the sensitive artist detected it years before the rest. When Schnitzler died, his will provided that the bulk of his fortune go to the needy of Vienna. The Nazis put his works on the "Verboten" list when they arrived seven years later.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

(1862-1949)

Maeterlinck's star was in eclipse when he died in 1949, but a previous generation had hailed him universally as 'the Belgian Shakespeare.' That was when his plays, *Pel-leas and Melisande* and *The Blue Bird* were considered outstanding examples of modern drama, and when, in 1911, the Nobel Prize for literature was bestowed upon him. Besides his plays, Maeterlinck wrote numerous books of essays and excellent natural histories, notably *The Life of the Bee*. Samuel Goldwyn imported him to Hollywood and

commissioned him to translate his greatest work into a scenario Maeterlinck brought in the finished work some weeks later Goldwyn took it into his private office to read, and emerged in a fury a few minutes later 'My God, he cried, "the hero is a beel

Maeterlinck was born and educated in Ghent, but settled in Paris in 1896 On his seventieth birthday he was raised to the rank of Count by the Belgian King In 1941, just before Hitler marched into Paris, Maeterlinck and his wife fled to America, where they resided until his death

W W JACOBS

(1863-1943)

William Wymark Jacobs was born and educated in London His early years were spent in the savings-bank department of the civil service He is best known as a writer of humorous tales of dock towns, ports, and the sea, such as *Many Cargoes*, *The Lady of the Barge*, and *Captains All* One horror story, *The Monkey's Paw*, has made him more famous than all the rest of his work put together, and no anthologist would dare omit it from a representative anthology In his own dramatization of the story, he has perhaps increased its cumulative suspense and terror

JOHN GALSWORTHY

(1867-1933)

The Forsyte Saga, of course, towers far above any other of John Galsworthy's works, but he is also the author of many other fine novels and plays His writings are possibly the clearest picture future generations will get of England in its heyday—the comfortable, secure, smug era that preceded the First World War—and his most notable full-length plays, *Strife*, *Justice*, and *Loyalties*, throw a penetrating light on some of the evils and injustices that lurked just under the surface of those placid late-Victorian and Edwardian days John Galsworthy was born at Coombe, in

Surrey, and educated at Harrow and New College, Oxford. He lived to enjoy a universal acclaim that is rarely bestowed on literary figures, and to see first editions of his novels selling for fantastic sums in the auction rooms. Mr Galsworthy was dead by the time this bubble burst.

The Little Man was produced first in England in 1916, and in New York a year later, as part of a double bill with Chesterton's *Magic* (The latter play bobbed up again last year along with Saroyan's *Hello Out There*.) The thesis of *The Little Man* is one of Galsworthy's standbys—the difference between verbal and practical humanity.

JOHN M. SYNGE

(1871–1909)

John M. Synge, whose *Riders to the Sea* and *The Playboy of the Western World* are two of the very finest plays of our time, was born, lived most of his short span of years, and died within walking distance of Dublin. He was there for the opening of the Abbey Theatre in 1904, when *Riders to the Sea* was first produced, and was a moving spirit in the Irish Players as long as he lived. Much of the material for his plays he collected during a sojourn to the Aran Islands, where he lived in just such a hut as is the setting for *Riders to the Sea*. Of this play, George Jean Nathan wrote “a classic of the modern Irish—of the modern world-theater. It testifies to the genius that combined in itself an ironic humor of rare and juicy puissance and a compassion for humanity drenched in the tears of a great pity's understanding.”

SERAFIN and JOAQUIN QUINTERO

(1871–?) (1873–?)

The Quinteros are—or were—Andalusians. No word of them reached America from the day Spain was plunged into civil war. They came to Madrid in their youth, and won names for themselves with a musical play called *The Good*

Spirits Subsequent comedy successes, including *Lady from Alfaqueque*, *One Hundred Years Ago*, and *Apple of His Eye*, won them the appellation of The Spanish equivalent of J M Barrie (quoted from the London *Times*) *A Sunny Morning* has been performed frequently by amateur groups in America

LORD DUNSANY

(Edward John Moreton Dray Plunkett)

(1878—)

Twenty years ago the plays and stories of Lord Dunsany were a great deal more popular in America than they are today Stuart Walker's Portmanteau Players were doing his elaborate whimsies with resounding success, and his *Tales of Wonder* was one of the featured titles in that sounding board of popular taste, the inexpensive reprints If Dunsany has in the past been overrated, he still has produced some first-rate material, and *A Night at an Inn* is typical of his best work When, on a visit to New York, he saw a production of this playlet at the Neighborhood Playhouse, he wrote 'I was surprised to note the thrill which it communicated to the audience It's a simple enough thing—merely a story of some sailors who have stolen something and know that they are followed I wrote it between tea and dinner in a single sitting That really was very easy!'

Dunsany is the eighteenth in a long line of Irish baronets In the First World War he was a Captain in the Royal Fusiliers He was Byron Professor of English Literature at Athens when the Nazis descended upon Greece, but escaped at the last moment and returned to Dublin His writings are greatly influenced by his study of the Bible and Greek Mythology

WILLIAM STANLEY HOUGHTON

(1881-1913)

Stanley Houghton was the son of a Manchester merchant who gave extraordinary promise as a playwright before he had finished his schooling. His plays were about the Lancashire life that he knew, *The Dear Departed* in 1908 and *Hindle Wakes* in 1912 achieved international success. In 1913, Houghton set up house in Paris, and began a play set in a new environment, he died, however, before he could complete it.

AUSTIN STRONG

(1881-)

Austin Strong was born in San Francisco, but shortly thereafter his family moved to New Zealand, and he had the exceptional good fortune of spending a considerable portion of his boyhood at Vailima with Robert Louis Stevenson. He graduated from Wellington College in New Zealand, and subsequently practiced architecture until 1905. Upon his return to America, he speedily won a reputation for himself as a playwright. After completing two highly successful one-act plays—*The Drums of Oude* and *The Little Father of the Wilderness*, he turned to full-length drama with the extremely popular *Three Wise Fools*, and later with that outstanding tear-jerker of the stage and screen, *Seventh Heaven*. During the last World War, the play which we included in this collection had the honor of being the first selected and printed by the War Department of the United States to be distributed throughout the training camps for presentation in the army. Mr. Strong lives in New York, but considers Nantucket his real home, where his chief delight is skippering a sailboat.

PHILIP MOELLER

(1880—)

Philip Moeller was one of the founders of the Washington Square Players, for whom he wrote *Helena's Husband* in 1916. When the Players blossomed into the prescient Theatre Guild, Moeller won a reputation as one of the shrewdest stage directors on Broadway. He also wrote *Madame Sand* and *Molière*, and adapted *Fata Morgana* from the Hungarian. In recent years, he seems to have lost interest in the theater, however. He severed his connection with the Guild entirely, and spends more and more of his time in his book-lined study, on Central Park South, New York.

SUSAN GLASPELL

(1882–1948)

Susan Glaspell was born in Iowa, but the greater part of her life was spent in New England—at Provincetown, on the tip of Cape Cod, where, until her death, she shared with Eugene O'Neill the distinction of being the town's most distinguished literary light. In 1913, she married George Cram Cook, and with him helped to organize the Provincetown Players. It was for this organization that she wrote *Trifles*, and, in collaboration with her husband, *Suppressed Desires*. In 1922, the Cooks moved to Greece, and lived at Delphi on Mount Parnassus until Mr. Cook died two years later. In 1931, Susan Glaspell won the Pulitzer drama award for *Alison's House*. Her last novel appeared in 1945. It was called *Judd Rankin's Daughter*.

KENNETH SAWYER GOODMAN

(1883–1918)

Lt. Kenneth Goodman died of pneumonia while serving at the Great Lakes Naval Base during the First World War. Before entering the Navy he had helped create an active repertory theater in Chicago, the Goodman Memorial

Theatre, erected in 1925, is named in his honor. He wrote several one-act plays, three of them in collaboration with Ben Hecht. The best of them, including *The Game of Chess*, are published in a volume entitled *Quick Curtains*.

RUPERT BROOKE

(1887-1915)

Rupert Brooke was another of the brilliant young men whose careers were snuffed out by the First World War. He was the son of a Rugby master, and was educated at Rugby and King's College, Cambridge. His first verse was published in 1911. In 1913 and 1914 he traveled in America and the South Seas. He died in service in the Mediterranean eight months after the declaration of war. His collected poems, published in 1918, gave ample evidence that the world had lost one of its most promising literary lights. *Lithuania* appears to be his sole venture in the field of drama.

HOLWORTHY HALL

(1887-1936)

Harold E. Porter was born in Boston in 1887 and educated at Harvard. His pen name, Holworthy Hall, was the name of one of the dormitories there. In the First World War, he served as Captain in the embryonic Air Force. Later he became an inveterate and hugely successful contributor to popular magazines. The fiction that he wrote was light and inconsequential; he will be remembered for his fine one-act play, *The Valiant*, first performed in 1921, and the winner in more than sixty amateur competitions. Robert Middlemass, his collaborator for this play, is equally well known as an actor, director, and writer. He was born in New Britain in 1885, and was a classmate of Porter at Harvard. Harold Porter died of pneumonia in Connecticut in his forty-ninth year.

EUGENE O NEILL

(1888-1953)

Pre-eminent among the dramatists of the world, Eugene O'Neill has brought to the American theater a new impetus and a new integrity. The son of a famous romantic actor, his infancy and youth were spent in the atmosphere of the theater while his father, James O'Neill, toured the country in *The Count of Monte Cristo* and Shakespearean repertory. After a year at Princeton and a brief career as a reporter in New London, Connecticut, O'Neill went to sea on a Norwegian barque and at the end of two years earned his Able Seaman's certificate. In 1914, following a year in Professor Baker's famous English 47 class at Harvard, he devoted himself exclusively to playwriting. Since then no fewer than thirty plays have come from his pen, and the whole world has sought to do him honor. Awarded the gold medal for drama by the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the degree of Litt. D. by Yale University, three times winner of the Pulitzer Prize for drama, he achieved his highest accolade when he was given the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1936. Eugene O'Neill's plays have been translated into almost all languages and have been performed in every civilized country of the world. His plays, next to Shakespeare's, are read by more people than are the works of any other dramatist, living or dead.

In the Zone was produced first by the Provincetown Players in 1919. It is one of the series of remarkable playlets that are presented generally under the title of *S. S. Glencarn*, and that were blended recently into a superior motion picture called *The Long Voyage Home*.

GEORGE S KAUFMAN

(1889-)

For some twenty years George S. Kaufman has dominated the field of high comedy in the American theater at

the present writing there is nobody in sight to challenge his supremacy. He has written only one play by himself (*The Butter and Egg Man* in 1925), but in collaboration with Marc Connelly, Edna Ferber, Moss Hart, and others, has turned out such resounding successes as *Dulcy*, *To the Ladies*, *The Royal Family*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Stage Door*, *You Can't Take It with You*, and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. His wit is biting and acidulous, and his manner sometimes brusque, but frightened newcomers speedily discover that he is one of the kindest and most understanding people in the world, with a heart, as Moss Hart says, that is just as hard and tough as a marshmallow.

Kaufman was born in Pittsburgh, and first achieved distinction as a contributor to F P A's daily column, and later as conductor of a column of his own. His first play, written with Marc Connelly, was *Dulcy*, produced in 1921, with Lynn Fontanne rising to stardom as a result. *If Men Played Cards as Women Do* is the cleverest of his many short playlets and revue sketches. It was revived as a feature of one of those typically modest five-million-dollar Hollywood productions, called *Star Spangled Rhythm*, in the Spring of 1943.

LAWRENCE LANGNER

(1890-)

Lawrence Langner was born in Swansea, South Wales, and educated in London. He came to New York in 1911, and became an American citizen in 1917, today he can be considered a typical New Yorker in every respect. He is an eminently successful patent lawyer, a founder and patron saint of the Theatre Guild, a playwright, and a frequent contributor to leading magazines. He is one of the few people in the world who knew how to handle Bernard Shaw. With his talented wife, Armina, he wrote *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Susanna and the Elders*. Together, they own and operate the Westport Country Playhouse, one of

the first and best of the theaters on the straw-hat ' circuit Langner lives nearby, on a palatial estate where he does a certain amount of farming and watches other people exercise

Another Way Out was first produced by the Washington Square Players at the Princess Theatre on East Fifty-seventh Street

LEWIS BEACH

(1891-)

Lewis Beach is another American playwright whose work was first brought to public attention by the enterprising Washington Square Players. He graduated from George Pierce Baker's famous Harvard Workshop, and wrote *The Clod* in 1916. It was one of the Players' outstanding productions. Beach's full-length plays include *A Square Peg*, *Anne Vroome*, and *The Goose Hangs High*, the latter his greatest commercial success.

EDNA ST VINCENT MILLAY

(1892-1950)

Aria da Capo was Edna Millay's third published work, it appeared in 1921, after *Renascence* and *A Few Figs from Thistles*. It was one of three plays she wrote in verse, along with the libretto of *The King's Henchman* (for which Deems Taylor composed the music). It was for her glowing poetry, of course, that Miss Millay was famous; she was one of the greatest and certainly the most successful poets produced in America. She was born in Maine, and educated at Vassar; her poems had already made her famous by the time she was graduated. She moved to Greenwich Village (then in its heyday), gave readings of her poetry throughout the country, wrote airy and successful persiflage under the pen name of Nancy Boyd. In 1923 she won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Harp-Weaver*. In the same year she married Eugen Boissevain and moved to a farm near the Berkshires.

Here she lived in semi-retirement, writing less and less, until her death, of heart failure, in October, 1950

ALICE GERSTENBERG

(1893(?)—)

Many authorities accord Alice Gerstenberg credit for originating the expressionistic play—the device whereby the characters speak their subconscious thoughts as well as their conscious ones Eugene O'Neill, of course, perfected the formula, but seemingly it was first introduced by Miss Gerstenberg in her one-act play, *Overtones*. This was one of the early successes of the Washington Square Players, forerunners of the Theatre Guild. Alice Gerstenberg was born in Chicago, and is a graduate of Bryn Mawr. Her first novel, *Unquenched Fire*, was published in 1912. She is the author of many one-act plays, and made the dramatization of *Alice in Wonderland* that scored a solid success in New York in 1915. She is the founder and director of the Playwrights' Theatre of Chicago.

NOEL COWARD

(1899—)

Noel Coward is one of the most brilliant and versatile men of our time. Playwright, composer, director, actor, producer—Coward does so many things well, and with such apparent lack of effort, that he drives his competitors to distraction. With it all, he is charm personified—a man who knows his limitations, but is quite aware that at the sort of thing he *does* do, he is without an equal in the world.

Coward was born at Teddington, on the Thames, and received an education of sorts in and about London. In the first World War he performed such limited service as frail health would allow. His life and his income remained sketchy until 1923 when he wrote and acted in *The Vortex*.

After that, one brilliant success followed another *Hay Fever*, *Bitter Sweet*, *Private Lives*, *Design for Living*, *Cavalcade*, and a dozen others *Fumed Oak* is one of the most effective of a group of plays produced under the general title of *Tonight at 8 30* At the moment he is devoting himself exclusively to fiction and the completion of his memoirs, but mercurial by nature, he may have announced plans for a new play by the time this edition comes off the presses

CLIFFORD ODETS

(1906-)

The name of Clifford Odets flashed across the dramatic heavens like a meteor in 1934, when *Waiting for Lefty* won the New Theatre League one-act play contest and took the critics by storm Several months later, the Group Theatre production of *Awake and Sing* proved that Odets was no flash in the pan, and that a playwright second only to Eugene O'Neill in stature had been uncovered in America Subsequent plays were a disappointment to his admirers, and indeed, for several years, he deserted Broadway entirely and toiled moodily and with no conspicuous success in Hollywood In November, 1950, however, he made a triumphant return to what *Time* magazine termed 'The land of the living' with *The Country Girl* Like even his minor efforts this play is distinguished by crackling and stimulating dialogue

Odets was born in Philadelphia, but grew up in the Bronx New York He was playing small roles for the Theatre Guild when *Waiting for Lefty* made him famous overnight The action of this play was inspired by one of the more violent of New York's periodic taxicab strikes Odets' serene self-confidence reminds many Broadwayites of the late George Gershwin Like Gershwin, too, he began to paint in his leisure moments, and has turned out canvases

good enough for exhibition in the most exclusive Fifty-seventh Street galleries. He is also the possessor of one of the most comprehensive collections of recorded music in the country.

WILLIAM SAROYAN

(1909—)

William Saroyan's calculated whimsicality and instinctive urge to plunge into action whenever there is the remotest chance to get his name into print have annoyed some of our more conservative and puritanical critics to a point where they deny him the homage that is his just due. They will not—or cannot—recognize that beneath Saroyan's shenanigans there throbs an abundant and original talent, and an imagination and love of life that have already made a rich contribution to American literature and drama. Meanwhile, with a Pulitzer Prize play and two successive Book-of-the-Month Club choices to his credit at the advanced age of forty-one, Mr. Saroyan, product of the vineyards of Fresno, California, self-educated son of simple Armenian parents, has done right well for himself.

Saroyan's first published story was *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*. That was in 1934. His first play came in 1939, when the Group Theatre produced, as a frank experiment, *My Heart's in the Highlands*. A year later his *The Time of Your Life* had won a Pulitzer Award! He achieved his first nod from the august judges of the Book-of-the-Month Club with *My Name is Aram* in 1941, and scored a repeat performance with *The Human Comedy* in 1943.

Then Mr. Saroyan's career went into temporary eclipse. Subsequent books and plays were comparative failures. Wolcott Gibbs called him "a victim of his own uncontrollable fluency." Even less friendly critics jeered that he was a "Johnny-One-Note." Judging by past performances, Saroyan will make them eat those words.

IRWIN SHAW

(1914—)

Irwin Shaw was unknown when his potent *Bury the Dead* was first played at a special Sunday night performance in New York in 1936. The play attracted so much attention that it soon was made part of a regular bill, and much was expected of the young playwright's future efforts. If his subsequent plays (*Siege*, *The Gentle People*, *Retreat to Pleasure*, *Sons and Soldiers*, and *The Assassin*) did not quite measure up to his early promise, he has more than fulfilled the hopes of his admirers with a succession of superlative short stories (collected in one volume in 1950 under the title of *Mixed Company*) and a great war novel, *The Young Lions*, that topped the best-seller lists for months on end when it was published in 1948.

Shaw was born and educated in New York City. He lives there today, married to a beautiful girl, father of a lusty boy baby, conducting a course in writing at N Y U, completing a new novel called *The Troubled Air*, and savoring life to the full.